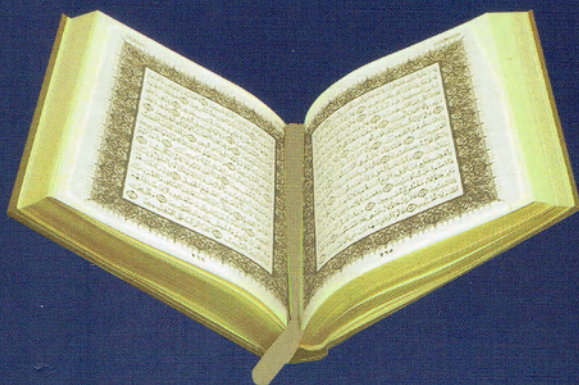


THE SOURCES OF THE QUR'AN

A CRITICAL REVIEW
OF THE AUTHORSHIP THEORIES

مصادر القرآن



HAMZA MUSTAFA NJOZI

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي
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IN THE NAME OF
ALLAH
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



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OF
THE QUR'AN**

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Transliteration Chart

| | |
|--------|--|
| أ | a |
| آ . آى | ā |
| ب | b |
| ت | t |
| ة | h or t (when followed by another Arabic word) |
| ث | th |
| ج | j |
| ح | ḥ |
| خ | kh |
| د | d |
| ذ | dh |
| ر | r |
| ز | z |
| س | s |
| ش | sh |
| ص | ṣ |
| ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ |

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| ظ | <u>dh</u> |
| ع | ‘ |
| غ | gh |
| ف | f |
| ق | q |
| ك | k |
| ل | l |
| م | m |
| ن | n |
| هـ - ه - هـ | h |
| و | w |
| و (as vowel) | ū or oo |
| ي | y |
| ي (as vowel) | ī or ee |
| ء | ’ |
| | (Omitted in initial position) |

| | | |
|-----|---------|------------------|
| َ | Fathah | a |
| ِ | Kasrah | i |
| ُ | Ḍammah | u |
| ّ | Shaddah | Double letter |
| ◌◌◌ | Sukūn | Absence of vowel |

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All praise is due to Allah, the Exalted, the Merciful, Who is the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Universe.

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HANZA MUSTAFA NJOZI

Section One

INTRODUCTION

Who is the author of the Qur'an? On this subject scholars have flagrantly contradicted each other. This work attempts to make a critical review of the major authorship theories by pressing into service logical arguments, historical evidence, textual analysis and scientific data.

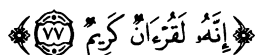
Probably, the only point of agreement about the Qur'an is that it was uttered for the first time by a man who was born in Makkah, a city of Arabia in the 6th Century by the name of Muhammad (Blessing and peace be upon him). As to the source of the Qur'an, scholars are divided into three main groups: those who believe that Muhammad (bpuh) himself was the author, those who believe that he was not the author but learned it from another human author or authors and those who believe that the Qur'an has no human author but it is a word for word revelation from God.

Section Two

MUHAMMAD (BPUH) AS THE AUTHOR

We begin by looking at the arguments of the scholars who regard Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) as the author. To appreciate their position it is important to keep in view what the Qur'an itself has to say about its source. The Qur'an states explicitly in Chapter 56 and verses 77 and 80:

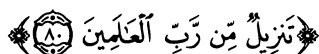
(سورة الواقعة: ٧٧)



"This is indeed a Qur'an; most honourable...."

(Qur'an 56: 77)

(سورة الواقعة: ٨٠)



"A Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds."

(Qur'an 56: 80)¹

A similar claim appears in several other places.² Moreover its style of address gives the impression that it emanates from the Creator to the creature. All chapters, except chapter nine, begin with the formula: *"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."*

¹ Unless explicitly stated I have throughout used the translation by 'Abdullah Yousuf 'Ali.

² The Qur'an says for example in (26: 192-193),
"Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth." Other references include, the Qur'an (25: 1), (3: 3), (4: 105), (16: 44) and (15: 9).

The address is in the First Person and in numerous places God commands Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) to say, i.e. “*Qul*”. In fact this command to say appears 332 times in the Qur’an.³ Other imperatives like “*proclaim*” or “*recite*”, “*glorify your Lord*”, “*prostrate yourself*” and many others have also been used.⁴ Although the assertion that the Qur’an is a divine revelation implies a negation of human authorship, the Qur’an nevertheless goes on to make a categorical assertion that no human being or Jinn can produce it:

﴿قُلْ لِّیْنَ اَجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰی اَنْ یَّاتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا یَاتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ کَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِیْرًا﴾

(سورة الاسراء: ٨٨)

“Say: ‘If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and supports.’” (Qur’an 17: 88)⁵

Apart from the assertion that it is a divine revelation and the emphatic negation of human authorship, the Qur’an also spells out the method of disproving it for those who doubt its divine source:

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِی رَیْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلٰی عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّمِّثْلِهٖ وَادْعُوْا شُهَدَآءَكُم مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوْا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوْا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِیْ وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ اُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِیْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٣-٢٤)

“And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sūrah [chapter]

³ We shall discuss the significance of this number later.

⁴ See examples in the Qur’an: (15: 49), (76: 24-26), (18: 27).

⁵ A similar challenge appears in the verses: (2: 23), (10: 38) and (11: 13).

like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers [if there are any] besides Allah, if your [doubts] are true. But if you cannot — and of a surety you cannot — then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones which is prepared for those who reject faith.”
(Qur'an 2: 23-24)

Responding to the charge that Muhammad (bpuh) was the author, the Qur'an commands him to reply back:

﴿... قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تِلْقَائِي نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾﴾

(سورة يونس: ١٥-١٦)

“... Say: ‘It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it; I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: If I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the Penalty of a Great Day [to come].’ Say: ‘If God had so willed, I should not have rehearsed it to you. A whole life-time before this I have tarried amongst you; Will you not then understand?’”

(Qur'an 10: 15-16)

Muhammad's critics are told to reflect on the fact that Muhammad (bpuh) had lived amongst them for forty years, without showing any signs of great learning or even a flair for poetry. He was in fact unlettered. How could they explain the fact that now he recited the Qur'an which was (and still is) unparalleled in sublimity? In fact addressing Muhammad himself the Qur'an says:

﴿وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخْطُهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذَا لَا زُنَابَ الْمُبِطِلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾

(سورة العنكبوت: ٤٨)

“And you were not [able] to recite a Book before this [Book came], nor were you [able] to transcribe it with your right hand: In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted.”
(Qur’an 29: 48)

His being unlettered has also been mentioned in the Qur’an (7: 157 and 158)

Apart from these quotations from the Qur’an Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) himself did make several statements to the effect that he was not the author of the Qur’an. A good example is the famous story of his first revelation in the cave of Hira’.⁶

Although Muhammad (bpuh) disclaimed authorship of the Qur’an, a number of scholars are convinced that he was in fact the author. The implication is that he deliberately lied when he attributed the Qur’an to God. Scholars have ascribed different motives to this apparent deception.

Charles Hamilton, translator of *The Hedaya: Commentary on the Islamic Laws*, writes in his preface to the translation:

“Who was the real Author of this extraordinary compound of declamation and precept, must for ever remain a matter of uncertainty, since on this point much difference of opinion obtained, even among the earliest opponents of Mohammed and his pretended mission. That this extraordinary person, however, was himself the principal projector, is beyond dispute, although it be probable that he received much assistance from others in the composition of it.”⁷

⁶ See Muhammad Muhsin Khān, (trans.). *The Translation of Meaning of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari*, (Arabic-English), Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1979, Vol. 1, hadith no. 3, Pp. 2-4.

⁷ Charles Hamilton (translation), *The Hedaya: Commentary on the Islamic Laws* (New Delhi: Kitāb Bhavan, 1985), Vol. 1, p. viii. This monumental=

Hamilton goes on to say that Muhammad (bpuh) was a impostor but ascribes no explicit motive to his fabrication. The same position is adopted by Richard Bell who writes in the preface to his translation, *The Qur'an: translated, with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Sūrah's*, that Muhammad (bpuh) himself wrote the Qur'an.⁸

In his book, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study* Bryan S. Turner says that Max Weber regarded Muhammad (bpuh) as an opportunist and that his followers were motivated solely by the prospects of booty and economic gain.⁹ According to Weber, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) realized that the appeal to piety and moral uprightness did not help him achieve his ambitions of political power, glory and economic gain. He therefore mobilized warriors to achieve his goal.

Furthermore, Weber seemed to imply that the Prophet 'more and more clearly' realized that his position depended on successful mobilization of warriors, whom Weber identified as the carrier group for the new religion. There are a number of salient features in Weber's argument. Since Muhammad (bpuh) failed to achieve an adequate foothold in Mecca, in the basis of 'pietistic conventicles', he had to appeal to warriors and inevitably his monotheistic message was fashioned in terms of military dynamism for a warrior caste and Muhammad's social doctrine 'was oriented almost entirely to the goal of the psychological preparation of the faithful for battle in order to maintain a maximum number of warriors for the faith'. Such warriors, were motivated, not in terms of pure devotion to the

=work was translated by order of the British Governor-General and Council of Bengal, Warren Hastings, Esq.

⁸ Richard Bell (Translation), *The Qur'an: Translated with a Critical Re-arrangement of the Sūrah's*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), Vol. 1, p. vi.

⁹ Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam: A Critical Study*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 23.

Prophet's charisma, but by the prospect of land and power. Hence, the religious war in Islam was essentially an enterprise directed towards the acquisition of large holdings of real estate, because it was primarily oriented to feudal interests in land.¹⁰

Kenneth Cragg, in *The Call of the Minaret* argues that the Qur'anic text is probably based on oral traditions but Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) attributed it to God because he wanted to save his people from the criminal folly of idolatry. The Qur'an according to him is an expression of Muhammad's conscious observation of the world around him:

"Such was the ground and meaning of Muhammad's call, in a brooding 'wilderness' experience, where facts of conscious observation in the contemporary scene became articulate in a personal calling to utterance and warning in the city."¹¹

Arthur J. Arbery, in his preface to *The Koran Interpreted* holds a similar view:

"The evidence rather shows, that in all he did and wrote, Muhammad was actuated by a sincere desire to deliver his countrymen from the grossness of its debasing idolatry — that he was urged on by an intense desire to proclaim that great truth of the Unity of the Godhead which had taken full possession of his own soul — that the end to be attained justified to his mind the means he adopted in the production of his Surahs — that he worked himself up into a belief that he had received a divine call — and that he was carried on by the force of circumstances, and by gradually increasing successes,

¹⁰ Bryan S. Turner, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹¹ Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), Pp. 76-77.

to believe himself and accredited messenger of Heaven.”¹²

However, Arbery's "Introduction" to the 1983 edition of his translation of the Qur'an, *The Koran Interpreted* does not seem to call into question the authenticity of the Qur'an.

According to M.M. Mulokozi it was the deep-seated desire to liberate his fatherland, Arabia, from imperialist domination which drove Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) to adopt prophethood as a means of unifying his people to fight their oppressors:

“Politically, therefore, Islam emerged from a colonial situation and oppression. The Islamic movement was to some extent, an attempt by the Arabs to disentangle themselves from the clutches of those three imperialist powers... The historic role of Islam was, therefore, to foster a spirit of nationalism, amongst them, and to lead them fight their oppressors. The means employed to bring about that unity is that of Prophethood, a means well-suited to the long-standing, centuries-old experience of the peoples of the Middle East.”¹³

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also suggest that Muhammad's prophetic call was merely a means of uniting the Arabs:

¹² Arthur J. Arbery, *The Koran Interpreted*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955), Vol. 1, p. 15.

¹³ M. M. Mulokozi, “*Utenzi wa Rasi L’Ghuli*” mimeo. A seminar paper presented at the TUKI Seminar 25 Feb. 1988, p. 4.

Since our translation is unofficial the full quotation in the original is:

“Kisiasa, basi Uislam ulianzia katika mazingira ya ukoloni na unyonge. Vuguvugu la Uislam, kwa kiasi Fulani ilikuwa ni jaribio la warabu la kujiasua kutoka katika makucha hayo ya madola matatu ya kibeberu... Jukumu la kihistoria la Uislam, basililikuwa ni kuwaunganisha Warabu wote bila kujali kabila, kujenga ari ya utaifa miongoni mwao, na kuwaongoza kupambana na wakandamizaji wao. Njia iliyotumiwa kuleta umoja huo ni ile ya Utume/Unabii, ambayo ilioana vizuri na uzoefu wa karne nyingi wa watu wa mashariki ya Kati.”

“About the age of 40 he received his ‘prophetic call’ to unite Arabs under a monotheism.”¹⁴

In a nutshell, Muhammad’s ascription of the Qur’an to a divine source is assumed to have been motivated by either economic gain, pursuit of power, moral reformation or political liberation of his people. The theories present numerous difficulties in their own justification. Let us begin with the idea of personal benefit.

¹⁴ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1981), Vol. 1, p. 715.

Section Three

MATERIAL GAIN AS THE MOTIVE

Some scholars argue that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was probably motivated by material gain. Since he was after the big game, he attributed the Qur'an to God so that he might gain even more material benefits. This hypothesis is, however, at variance with historical evidence. Muhammad's financial position was better off before than after his prophethood. When he was 25 (15 years before he claimed prophethood) he married and lived comfortably with Khadijah who was a rich businesswoman. After his prophethood his financial position and life standard was unenviable.

In a collection of Hadith by an-Nawawi, one of the Muhammad's wives, 'Ā'ishah, narrates that a month or two would go by without fire being lit in their house because there was nothing to cook. They survived on dates and water. Sometimes this diet was supplemented with goat milk from the people of Madinah.¹⁵ Martin Lings says in his book, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*:

"The Prophet and his family had lived a life of utmost frugality. Aisha said that before (the conquest of) Khayber she had not known what it was to eat her fill of dates. Such was the poverty of their ever-increasing dependants that the Prophet's wives had only asked him for what they needed, and not

¹⁵ 'Abdur-Rahmān Shad (translation), *Riyadh aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn*, compiled by Imam Yaḥyā ibn Sharafuddīn an-Nawawī, (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1984), hadith No. 494 and 495, Pp. 323-324.

always that.”¹⁶

This was not just a temporary sacrifice but a way of life. This was at a time when Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) could have lived as a king if he so wished. In fact there was a sort of protest by his wives as to why they should go on living in poor conditions when they could wallow in luxury.¹⁷

The Prophet was disturbed by this discontent. A revelation came commanding him to tell his wives to choose either Allah and His Messenger or the fleeting glitter of this world:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَرَبِّتَهُنَّ
فَمَعَالِيكَ أُمَتَّعَنَّ وَأَسْرَحَنَّ سَرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِن كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾﴾

(سورة الأحزاب : ٢٨-٢٩)

“O’ Prophet! Say to your consorts: ‘If it be that you desire the life of this world and its glitter, then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner. But if you seek God and His Apostle, and the Home of the Hereafter, verily God has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward.” (Qur’an 33: 28-29)

Describing the room of the Prophet, ‘Umar (Caliph and a Companion of the Prophet) says:

“I noticed that the contents of his room comprised of only three pieces of tanned skin and a handful of barley lying in a corner. I looked about but failed to find anything else. I began

¹⁶ Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1983), p. 276.

¹⁷ Ibid, chapter LXXI, Pp. 274-279.

to weep. He (the Prophet) said; 'Why are you weeping?' I replied: 'O' Prophet of Allah! Why should I not weep? I can see the mat's pattern imprinted on your body and I am also beholding all that you have got in this room. O' Prophet of Allah! Pray that Allah may grant ample provisions for us. The Persians and Romans who have no true faith and who worship not Allah but their kings — the Kaiser (Qaysar) and the Kisra (Chosroes/Khusraos) could live in gardens with streams running in their midst, but the chosen Prophet and the accepted slave of Allah should live in such dire poverty!' The Prophet was resting against his pillow, but when he heard me talk like this, he sat up and said: 'O' 'Umar! Are you still in doubt about this matter? Ease and comfort in the Hereafter are much better than ease and comfort in this world. The unbelievers are enjoying their share of the good things in this world whereas we have all such things in store for us in the next'. I implored him: 'O' Prophet of Allah! Ask forgiveness for me. It was really my error'."¹⁸

Someone had also inquired of 'Ā'ishah about the bedding of the Prophet in her house. Her reply was:

"It comprises of leather filled with the bark of date-palm."¹⁹

And when a similar question was put to Ḥaḥṣah (wife of the Prophet), she said,

"It comprised of a piece of canvas which I spread double-folded under him. Once I did it four-fold in an effort to make it more comfortable." The next morning he asked me: "What did

¹⁸ H. Nizāmuddin, *The Teachings of Islam*, (New Delhi: Idara Ishāt-e-Dīniyāt, no date), Pp. 49-50. This episode has also been mentioned in Martin Lings, *Muhammad*, p. 279.

¹⁹ Ibid.

you spread under me last night?” I replied: “The same canvas, but I had four-folded it instead of the customary double fold,” He said, “Keep it as it was before. The additional softness stands in the way of *Tahajjud* (night prayer).”²⁰

Muhammad’s deprivation was self-imposed because whenever he received a gift (on one occasion he received a gift of four loaded camels from the chief of Fidak), he distributed the lot to the poor and declined to take anything for himself.²¹ At the time of his death Muhammad was penniless. He had seven dinars in his possession but had them distributed to the poor a few days before his death, being afraid that they might be left behind.²² It has also been reported that at the time of his death and in spite of all his victories and achievements, Muhammad was in debt, and his shield was in the hands of a Jewish citizen of Madinah as a collateral for that debt!²³

There are numerous other citations which show that Muhammad (bpuh) had lived a consistently frugal life from the beginning of his apostleship until his death.²⁴ The idea that he was after material gain is inconsistent with historical evidence. As the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* observes:

“A case has been made that mere economic gain was the inspiration of Muhammad’s religious revolution. That case does not suit the facts as they are known.”²⁵

²⁰ Op. cit. p. 50

²¹ For a full account see Bilal’s narration in H. Nizāmuddin, Op. cit, Pp. 55-57.

²² Hafiz G. Sarwar, *Muhammad: The Holy Prophet*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1969), p. 376.

²³ Jamal Badawi, *Muhammad’s Prophethood: An Analytical View*, (Minna, I. E. T., 1981). p. 8.

²⁴ See for example, ‘Abdur-Raḥmān Shad (trans.), *Riyadh aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn*, hadith nos. 474, 475, 476, 477 and 478, Pp. 315-317.

²⁵ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, p. 1001.

Section Four

DESIRE FOR POWER AND GLORY

The suggestion that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was actuated by a desire for power and glory is equally difficult to sustain. To begin with, Muhammad (bpuh) has universally been acknowledged as one of the most successful leaders in human history. A man with his qualities could claim leadership and assume power even without claiming prophethood. In fact, it would have been easier that way. Secondly, the Qur'an states very clearly that no one including Muhammad (bpuh) himself can produce anything similar to the Qur'an. If he were after power and glory he would have claimed authorship of the Qur'an whose beauty and sublimity dwarfed all other books.

Moreover, his character suggests that he was neither a power-monger nor a glory-seeker. The desire for glory normally finds expression in magnificent places, fancy clothes, beautiful cars, addiction to inordinate praises, pleasant falsehood, and so on. Muhammad (bpuh) was an amazing example of humility. Despite his social standing as the Prophet and his heavy responsibilities as a statesman, Muhammad (bpuh) used to help with domestic chores. He mended his garments, repaired his shoes and milked his goat.²⁶ He talked and listened patiently to anyone who approached him. So much so that the Qur'an says his detractors complained saying:

(سورة التوبة: ٦١)

﴿... هُوَ أَذْنٌ ...﴾

²⁶ Kashmiri, Ismail (n.d.), *Prophet of Islam, Muhammad and Some of his Traditions*, Cairo, The Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.

“... He [the Prophet] listens to everybody!...”

(Qur'an 9: 61)²⁷

At one point Muslims used to stand up when they wanted to greet him as a mark of respect but he prohibited them saying, “Do not stand up as the Persians do, some people honouring the others.”²⁸ Other examples of his humility include those cited by Jamal Badawi who writes:

“Once he was travelling with some of his Companions who began to prepare to cook some food by dividing the work among themselves. Muhammad (bpuh) wanted to be in charge of collecting some wood. His Companions told him that they could do it for him. Muhammad (bpuh) answered back, ‘I know you could do it for me but I hate to have any privilege over you.’”

Jamal Badawi continues:

“A stranger once came to Muhammad (bpuh) almost trembling out of respect. He asked the man to come closer to him and with a compassionate pat on the man’s shoulder, he told him: ‘Relax brother, I am only the son of a woman who used to eat dried bread.’”²⁹

It has also been reported that once some people came to the Prophet and addressed him in the following words: “O’ Messenger of Allah, the best of us and the son of the best of us, our leader and the son of our leader”. His reply was:

²⁷ Op. cit, 16-17.

²⁸ Yusuf al-Qaradawi (translation), *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, (Lebanon: IIFSO, 1984), p. 103. Not to mention the practice of forcing all the people to stand up and clap their hands as they shout the name of the VIP.

²⁹ Jamal A. Badawi, *Muhammad’s Prophethood: An Analytical View*, Pp. 9-10.

“O’ People, say what you said previously or part of it and do not let Satan mislead you. I am Muhammad a slave of Allah and His Messenger. I do not like you raising my status above the status which Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, has given me.”³⁰

The death of Muhammad’s most beloved son Ibrāhīm coincided with the eclipse of the sun and people regarded it as a miracle from God that heavens and earth were mourning the death of Ibrāhīm. Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was very angry with them and said:

“The sun and the moon are two signs out of God’s signs. They are not eclipsed because of the death or birth of any human being.”³¹

The amazing extent of his humility can be seen in the manner in which he exercised his authority. His followers were always prepared to obey him, but he kept on insisting that obedience should be directed to God and not to him personally. He made a clear distinction between revelations he received from God and other areas open to human judgement. Muhammad (bpuh) consulted on matters which fell in the latter category, and respected the opinion of others. In the battle of Badr, for example, the advice of Ḥabīb ibn al-Mundhir was accepted by the Prophet against his own decision.³² Similarly, in

³⁰ Yousuf al-Qaradawi, (trans.) *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, p. 103. In the collection of hadiths by Bukhari it is reported that one day the Prophet passed by a group of young girls who were singing on some occasion. One of them composed a poem which said: “Among us is a Prophet who knows what will happen in the future.” The Prophet admonished the girl saying: “Do not say that of me, make any other poem.”

³¹ Hafiz G. Sarwar, *Muhammad: The Holy Prophet*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1969), p. 337.

³² See chapter XLII of Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1983), particularly p. 143.

the battle of Uhud, Muhammad's initial plan was 'not to go out from the city, but to stand siege within its walls... he held consultation as whether they should march out or not'.³³ The majority were against remaining behind the city walls and he accepted their decision. In the battle of the Trench he accepted Salman's proposal to dig a trench surrounding the city of Madinah.³⁴

Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) forbade people to make his graveyard a place of worship, saying,

"Do not make my grave a site for festivals" and he prayed to his Lord, "O my Lord, do not let my grave be made into an idol to be worshipped."

And he categorically warned Muslims not over praise him:

"Do not glorify me in the same manner as the Christians glorify Jesus, son of Mary, but say, He is a slave of Allah and His Messenger."³⁵

In fact even the Qur'an warns people against overpraising each other.³⁶

In addition, there are several other reasons which further complicate the theory that Muhammad (bpuh) authored the Qur'an in order to satisfy his ambitions for power and self- aggrandizement. First, Muhammad (bpuh) would have naturally omitted from the Qur'an those verses which were likely to hamper his ambitions. But this, he did not do. Why should he author a book which commanded

³³ Martin Lings, Op. cit, p. 174, see also Hafiz G. Sarwar's Op. cit, p. 201.

³⁴ Martin Lings, Op. cit, p. 217. He was actually complying with Qur'anic injunction that Muslims should make mutual consultations in the running of their affairs. See Qur'an 42: 38.

³⁵ Both hadiths have been cited in Yousuf al-Qaradawi's, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, p. 103.

³⁶ The Qur'an, (53: 32).

him to declare to the people that he was powerless and had no knowledge of the unseen and that had he any such power he would have multiplied all good and no evil should have touched him?³⁷ Or why should he author a book which commanded him to say that he had come with no new doctrine nor did he even expect that such a Book would be revealed to him and he should therefore announce to the people that he is a mere human being like any other human being.³⁸ If the desire for power had motivated Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) to consciously compose the Qur'an then it is very difficult to account for the existence of such verses.

Secondly, Muhammad's reaction after receiving his first revelation indicates that he had no secret aspirations for power. After his experiences at the Cave of Hira he rushed back to his wife, filled with fear, and he was trembling as if he had a fever and asked his wife to cover him up with a cloak. After the fear had passed away he related to her all that had happened and said:

“O' Khadijah, what is the matter with me?”³⁹

If revelation was actually part of Muhammad's secret plan to win power he would have nothing to fear at all. And even if he had not planned for revelation but merely cherished an intense desire for prophethood, his first experiences of revelation would have filled his heart with joy, for, in that case, he would be getting what he had always wanted. Available evidence shows he neither planned for, nor expected, revelation. Revelation took him by surprise. On this the Qur'an says:

³⁷ The Qur'an, (7: 188).

³⁸ The Qur'an, (46: 9), (28: 86), (18: 110) and (6: 50).

³⁹ The story of Muhammad's first revelation appears in almost all biographies of Muhammad. See for example Martin Ling's *Op. cit.*, chapter XV, Pp. 43-44 or H. Sarwar's *Op. cit.*, Pp. 65-67.

﴿وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ﴾

(سورة القصص : ٨٦)



“And you [O’ Muhammad] had not expected that the Book would be sent to you except as a Mercy from the Lord...”

(Qur’an 28: 86)

Thirdly, on numerous occasions, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) received revelation in the presence of his Companions, and they noticed marked changes in his countenance. Even on a very cold day he used to sweat profusely and his limbs were very tense. If Muhammad (bpuh) were a power-seeker who merely used the Qur’an to boost his ego, he would have tried to appear composed and in full control of all his faculties. To show tension in public is normally regarded as a weakness. Even at very critical moments in their career, political leaders take much pain to appear calm, or at least, project an image of calmness.

Fourthly, during the most difficult period of torture, suffering and persecution in Muhammad’s prophetic career, an attractive offer was made to him by the chiefs of Makkah in return for which he should stop what they regarded as dividing the people. The condition given to him was that he should give up his belief in the existence of only One Universal God. It was ‘Utbah ibn Rabi’ah who presented the offer to Muhammad (bpuh) in the following words:

“Son of my brother..., thou art as thou knowest a noble of the tribe and thy lineage assureth thee of a place of honour. And now thou hast brought to thy people a matter of grave concern, whereby thou hast rifted their community, declared their way of life to be foolish, spoken shamefully of gods and their religion, and called their forefathers infidels. So hear what I propose, and see if any of it be acceptable to thee. If it be wealth thou seekest, we will put together a fortune for thee

from our various properties that thou mayst be the richest man amongst us. If it be honour thou seekest, we will make thee our overlord and take no decision without thy consent; and if thou wouldst have kingship; we will make thee our king; and if thyself thou canst not rid thee of this sprite that appeareth unto thee we will find thee a physician and spend our wealth until thy cure be complete.”⁴⁰

It is interesting to note here that by the above offer it is clear that the Quraysh had also speculated on all the motives which modern scholars are imputing to Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). In reply to this offer, Muhammad recited verses 1-38 of chapter 41 which had recently been revealed to him. Here below are the first four and the last two verses of the recitation.

﴿حَمْدٌ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ ﴿٢﴾ كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ
قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ
لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٤﴾ (سورة فصلت: ١-٤)

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا
لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ
إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَإِنْ أَسْكَبُوا فَإَلْذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ
لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ (سورة فصلت: ٣٧-٣٨)

“Ha-Mim. A revelation from [God], Most Gracious, Most Merciful. A Book, whereof the verses are explained in

⁴⁰ Martin Lings, Op, cit, Pp. 60-61, in Hafiz Sarwar's Op. cit, p. 91. When the Quraysh had earlier threatened him with persecution or death if he did not renounce his new faith Muhammad's reply to his uncle Abu Tālib was, "O' my uncle! By God if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in order that I may give up my work, I will not do so. I will go on till God helps me or I die in the effort." See Sarwar's Op. cit, p. 88.

detail; — a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who understand; Giving good News and Admonition; yet most of them turn away, and so they hear not..." (Qur'an 41: 1-4)

"Among His Signs are the Night and the Day, and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun and the moon, but adore God, Who created them, if it is Him you wish to serve. But if the [Unbelievers] are arrogant, [no matter]: For in the presence of your Lord are those who celebrate His praises by night and by day. And they never flag." (Qur'an 41: 37-38)

'Utbah was convinced that Muhammad was a prophet of God. His pagan friends ridiculed him for being bewitched by Muhammad's recitation.

The problem is: If Muhammad (bpuh) had composed the Qur'an as a means of getting riches, or power, there could be no better offer. Why did he reject it?

Section Five

UNITY AND LIBERATION OF ARABS

The theory that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had authored the Qur'an in order to unite and liberate the Arabs is very difficult to defend for the following reasons:

Firstly, if that were the case, the Qur'an would have put much accent on the theme of unity and liberation of Arabs. In fact there is not a single verse in the whole Qur'an calling for the unity or liberation of the Arab nation. If we assume that Muhammad (bpuh) was the author, then his motive was not the unity of the Arabs, or at least that motive is not reflected in the Qur'an.

Secondly, the Qur'anic concept of Ummah (nation) is ideological, and is against any manifestations of nationalistic tendencies. It is based on the criterion of truth (*haq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*).⁴¹ Anyone who accepts that ideology is a member irrespective of his nation, race, colour, or even blood ties. In practice, sometimes, it meant the separation of father and son. For, according to the Qur'an the bond of faith is more important than the ties of blood.⁴² It was because of the apparent rift which this ideology caused to the Arab nation that 'Utbah put forward the above mentioned proposals. And their concern was particularly heightened when the Prophet's uncle, Ḥamzah had accepted Islam.⁴³ The unity which prevailed in Arabia

⁴¹ For a detailed account refer to Syed M. Syed's article "*Concept of Islamic State and Ummah*" in Islamic Training Programme Manual, (Durban: The MYM of S.A., 1981), Pp. 5-7.

⁴² See for example, the Qur'an (9: 23), (11: 45-46), (2: 124) and (66: 10-11).

⁴³ See Martin Lings, Op. cit, Pp. 60-61.

after the triumph of Islam was ideological, and that unity is strongly encouraged by the Qur'an.⁴⁴

Thirdly, if the unity of the Arabs as was Muhammad's overriding consideration he would have gladly accepted the offer to be king of the Arabs and use his power and influence to build a unified Arabia.

Fourthly, there are some verses in the Qur'an which seem to contradict the idea that Muhammad's motive was to build Arab nationalism. One verse in the Qur'an says:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَكَةُ يَمْرُؤُا إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ
عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾
(سورة آل عمران: ٤٢)

“Behold! The Angels said: ‘O’ Mary! God has chosen thee and purified thee — chosen thee above the women of all nations.’”
(Qur'an 3: 42)

The above verse is referring to Mary, the mother of Jesus! *“Chosen thee above the women of all nations.”* Such an honour is not accorded to Mary even in the Christian Bible!⁴⁵ Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was an Arab and initially he was addressing other Arabs. Whether they like it or not, he told them in the most sublime language of the Qur'an, that Mary — the mother of Jesus — a Jewess — was chosen above the women of all nations. Not his own mother nor any other Arab women! Why should Muhammad (bpuh) who wanted to foster Arab nationalism, instead of preaching the superiority of the Arab nation, go all his way to honour in such noble terms a woman from his opposition? A Jewess who belonged to a hostile race which despised Arabs as an inferior race? The Arab unity theory would also seem incapable of a satisfactory explanation of the following Qur'anic statement in 2: 47:

⁴⁴ See for example in the Qur'an, (61: 4), (3: 103).

⁴⁵ Ahmed Dīdat, *Christ in Islam*, (Durban: The Islam Propagation Centre, no date), p. 8.

﴿يَبْنَى إِسْرَءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاَنِي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٧)

“O’ Children of Israel! Call to mind the special favour which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all others [for My Message].” (Qur’an 2: 47)

If Muhammad (bpuh) was bent on building Arab nationalism it is inconceivable that he should have described the children of Israel as a specially favoured group. That would have been a very strange way of rekindling feelings of Arab nationalism and pride.

Section Six

MORAL REFORMATION

In view of the above difficulties, some scholars have put forward moral reformation as a probable motive which actuated Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) to compose the Qur'an. The reformation theory presents several problems.

Moral reformation is a noble objective which could be achieved without resorting to immoral acts like deceit and lies. The reason for his choice of immoral means to build a moral society is neither clear nor stated by the proponents of this theory.

The second problem is that the Qur'an designates lying against God as one of the most abominable sins:

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ

شَيْءٌ... ﴿٩٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٩٣)

“Who can be more wicked than one who invents a lie against God, or says, ‘I have received inspiration’, when he has received none...” (Qur'an 6: 93)⁴⁶

The above verse goes on to prescribe the most humiliating punishment for such liars. Knowing that he was the author of the Qur'an and knowing also that he was deceitfully ascribing it to God, it is most unlikely that Muhammad (bpuh) should have described

⁴⁶ Other references include (69: 44-45) which says if the apostle were to invent any sayings in God's name, God would certainly cut off the artery of his heart. See also the Qur'an (42: 24) and (16: 105).

himself as the most wicked man. Apprehension of the possibility that his fabrication might one day be uncovered would have induced him to modify the above verse into something like, “There is no blame for those who, if need be, lie for the sake of God”. Actually, St. Paul for example says in Romans 3: 7,

“Again, if the truth of God brings him all the greater honour because of my falsehood, why should I any longer be condemned as a sinner?”

Thirdly, Muhammad (bpuh) did not bring the whole Qur’an at one sitting. He recited it piecemeal for a period of 23 years, and during which period the Qur’an had made an open and definite promise to answer any questions that would be asked concerning anything:

﴿... وَإِنْ تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْآنُ تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ ...﴾ (١٠١)

(سورة المائدة: ١٠١)

“... If you ask about things when the Qur’an is being revealed they will be made plain to you...” (Qur’an 5: 101)

People availed themselves of this opportunity to ask a wide range of questions, covering for example wine, gambling, menstruation, spoils of war, the soul or even about historical figure like Dhul-Qarnayn. It was in response to such questions that the Qur’an says in at least 15 places, that “*They ask you [O’ Muhammad] concerning such and such a matter. Say: It is so and so*”.⁴⁷ The difficulty that emerges here is that there is no way Muhammad (bpuh) could have known before-hand that the questions he had invited would perfectly suit his reformation purposes for which he had set out to write the Qur’an! It would hardly be advisable for a president

⁴⁷ For example: (2: 189), (2: 215), (2: 217) and (2: 219). It should be borne in mind however that the Qur’an has responded to some of those questions without using the above phrase. The story about the People of the Cave which appears in (18: 9-26) is one example.

who wants to talk about the food situation of his country to call a press conference and invite pressmen to ask him any questions. They may choose to inquire about political prisoners!

Another problem which militates against the moral reformation theory is the fact that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) himself is corrected by the Qur'an in several places. To cite but one example, Ḥamzah, the uncle of the Prophet was killed during the battle of Uḥud. At the instigation of Ḥind, the wife of Abu Sufyān his body was ripped open and violently mutilated. When the Prophet saw what had been done he said:

"Never yet have I felt more anger than now I feel; and when next time God gives me victory over Quraysh I will mutilate thirty of their dead."

But soon after this there came the Revelation:

﴿وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ﴾
(سورة التحل: ١٢٦)

"If you inflict punishment, then inflict only so much as you have suffered; but if you endure patiently, that is better for the patient."
(Qur'an 16: 126)⁴⁸

And not only that he did not fulfill his threat, but he expressly forbade mutilation after every battle.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Similarly, when the Prophet was wounded in the battle of Uḥud he invoked evil upon his enemies and said: "How can that community prosper which wounds the Prophet." The following verses were revealed in answer to that curse: (3:128-129). See, A. A. Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, (Nairobi).

⁴⁹ Martin Lings, Op. cit, p. 191. for details of the mutilation and how Ḥind actually chewed the liver of Ḥamzah see p. 189. She was avenging her father 'Utba and her brothers Walīd and Shaybah who were killed in the battle of Badr. See also Hafiz G. Sarwar, Op. cit, p. 192.

In fact even the assumption that moral reformation is the central concern of the Qur'an is incorrect. Moral precepts are only part of the message. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an which invite man to research and study the universe, like:

﴿قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ...﴾ (٢٠)

(سورة الغنكوت: ٢٠)

"Say: 'Travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation...'" (Qur'an 29: 20)⁵⁰

The significance accorded by the Qur'an to the study of the universe can be measured by the fact that while there are 150 verses on beliefs and precepts there are 756 verses of natural phenomena.⁵¹

Finally, the suggestion that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had consciously fabricated the Qur'an is inconsistent with all available records of his character. Even before his claim to prophethood he was known as Muhammad, the Truthful, the Trustworthy.⁵² Not a single lie has been recorded against him and this fact has been acknowledged even by his enemies. Early in his mission for example he called all the Quraysh at Mount Safa. The people gathered there and asked him, "What is the matter?" He said: "Just consider this, If I told you there was an army at the back of this hill (waiting to attack you), would you believe me?" They said: "Yes,

⁵⁰ Other references include, (12: 105), (2: 29), (38: 27), (7: 185).

⁵¹ See the Appendix in 'Ali Mūsa Raza Muhājir's *Islam in Practical Life*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968).

⁵² In the incident of re-building the Ka'bah for example, Abu Omayya ibn al-Mughīra said: "Make the one who first enters the *Bāb as-Safa* your arbitrator." When they saw Muhammad was the first to enter they all cried: "Here is the trustworthy (*al-Amīn*), we will abide by his judgement." Muhammad was then 23 years old. See Hafiz G. Sarwar, Op. cit, Pp. 56-57.

you are the one without blemish and we have never known you tell a lie”⁵³

His trustworthiness is also exemplified by the fact that on the night he migrated to Madinah as the plotters surrounded his house, before he left he instructed ‘Ali to return back to non-Muslims the trusts they had given him to keep. This signifies that even though they accused him publicly in their own hearts they had so much trust in him that they entrusted their valuables with him.⁵⁴

In view of the above evidence particularly Muhammad’s (bpuh) unimpeachable sincerity some scholars reject the idea that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had consciously fabricated the Qur’an, they instead postulate the theory that he fabricated the Qur’an unconsciously.

⁵³ Hafiz G. Sarwar, Op. cit, p. 80. When Abu Sufyān, an archenemy of Muhammad was asked by Heraclius “Have you ever accused him of telling lies before this claim (to be a Prophet)?” His reply was in the negative. Heraclius further asked: “What does he orders you to do?” Abu Sufyān replied: “He tells us to worship Allah and Allah alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and to renounce all that our ancestors had said. He orders us to pray, to speak the truth, to be chaste and to keep good relations with our kith and kin.” For the full interview see Muhammad Muḥsin Khān, (trans.) Op. cit: Arabic-English. (Lahore: Kazi Publications, 1979), Vol. 1 hadith No. 6, Pp. 7-14.

⁵⁴ Hafiz G. Sarwar, Op. cit, p. 147. - ‘Abdullah ibn Abi al-Hamsa has also been quoted as saying: “Long before Muhammad proclaimed his mission I had some transaction with him. The transaction was not completed when I told him that I would come later on but I forgot the affair altogether. Three days after, when I went past the place I found that he was waiting for me. He was not in the least annoyed with me at my carelessness. All that he said was: “You put me to the trouble of being present here for three days.” See Hafiz G. Sarwar, *Muhammad, The Holy Prophet*, Pp. 55-56.

Section Seven

UNCONSCIOUS FABRICATION

This theory is probably based on the following two hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari* which describe the state of Muhammad (bpuh) at the time of revelation and how his Divine Inspiration began. Both hadiths are narrated by his wife ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). Narrated ‘Ā’ishah, the mother of faithful believers:

“Al-Harith ibn Hisham asked Allah’s Apostle ‘O’ Allah’s Apostle! How is the Divine Inspiration revealed to you?’ Allah’s Apostle replied, ‘Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell, this form of Inspiration is the hardest of all and then the state passes off after I have grasped what is inspired. Sometimes the Angel comes in the form of a man and talks to me and I grasp whatever he says.’ ‘Ā’ishah added: ‘Verily I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the Inspiration was over).’”⁵⁵

Another hadith says that ‘Ā’ishah, the mother of the faithful believers narrated:

“The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah’s Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone)

⁵⁵ Muhammad Muḥsin Khān, Op. cit, Vol. 1, hadith No. 2, p. 2.

continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadijah to take his food likewise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, 'I do not know how to read...'”⁵⁶

Philip K. Hitti in his book, *Islam and the West: A Historical Survey*, says:

“The Prophet experienced ecstatic seizures as he received the revelations, giving rise to the charge that, he was epileptic.”⁵⁷

In *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, Norman Daniel, citing some of these views, writes:

“In some versions, Muhammad had already convinced Khadijah of his latent divinity by magic arts; in others he only claimed revelation after (and in order to explain away) his first epileptic stroke which the judgement of God meted out to him. At its simplest, the story omitted Khadijah’s part; they were just epileptic fits explained as angelic visitations.”⁵⁸

Describing Mark’s position Norman Daniel writes:

“Mark of Toledo has spoken more cannily of Muhammad’s acting as though he suffered from epilepsy, ... equally, he spoke of his rising from his fits, and rolling his yes, whatever Mark owed to the epileptic theory, he refused to commit

⁵⁶ Muhammad Muḥsin Khān, Op. cit, Vol. 2, hadith No. 3, Pp. 2-4. I have quoted only part of it.

⁵⁷ Philip K. Hitti, *Islam and the West: A Historical Cultural Survey* (New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1962), p. 14.

⁵⁸ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*, (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1960) Pp. 27-28.

himself either to it or to that of demoniac possession.”⁵⁹

Apart from the epileptic theory, there is also what we can call the religious illusion theory. According to this theory, a man who is deeply religious may experience visions which lead him to think that what he imagines comes from God while that is not the case. Rev. J. M. Rodwell has been quoted as saying:

“He (Muhammad) was probably, more or less, throughout his whole career, the victim of a certain amount of self-deception. A cataleptic subject from his early youth, born — according to the traditions — of a highly nervous and excitable mother, he would be peculiarly liable to morbid and fantastic hallucinations, and alternations of excitement and depression, which would win for him, in the eyes of his ignorant countrymen, the credit of being inspired...”⁶⁰

R. A. Nicholson is another scholar who seems to propound the religious illusion theory. Nicholson says:

“Whether we regard it as ‘a pathological case’ or a grand example of mystical ecstasy, the thing is essentially inexplicable, though at the outset of his mission a dominating motive can be discerned in his conviction that the Last Judgement was near and that he must at all costs warn his countrymen of the doom impending.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Norman Daniel, *Op. cit.*

⁶⁰ I have quoted Rev. Rodwell’s words from A.J. Arbery’s, *Preface to The Koran Interpreted*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955), Vol. I, p. 15.

⁶¹ R.A. Nicholson, in his introduction to E.H. Palmer’s translation, *The Koran*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), Pp. 1X-X.

Although the Qur'an was uninspired, Nicholson says, Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was not conscious of his fabrication:

"To say that the ... Qur'an is, on the whole, uninspired does not mean that its author was conscious of fraud when he gave out all sorts of regulations and instructions in God's name."⁶²

Nicholson suggests that an explanation can be found in Muhammad's (bpuh) addiction to seclusion particularly during the night:

"He was addicted to the practice of solitary prayer, especially during the night, and may well have cultivated it for the purpose of inducing the abnormal states which caused his enemies to describe as possessed by the jinn."⁶³

According to Bryan S. Turner,

"Traditional European biographies of the Prophet have either taken the position that Muhammad was psychologically normal but insincere about his supposed message from Allah or that Muhammad was insane and believed in the truth of his prophetic mission."⁶⁴

However, Robinson, an avowed atheist, came up with a theory which he felt would rescue Muhammad (bpuh) from both charges of hypocrisy and insanity. His theory is that the Qur'an is the product of Muhammad's unconscious. It is not a divine revelation but an unconscious re-creation of past experiences and knowledge which

⁶² R.A. Nicholson, Introduction, p.x.

⁶³ Ibid, p. xi. Sometimes the story of St. Joan of Arc is cited as a practical example of religious Illusions. For details of her "vision" and "voices" see *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, p. 992.

⁶⁴ Bryan S. Turner, Op. cit, p. 36.

Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had mistakenly appropriated.⁶⁵

In summary, there are three main variations within this theory. Their common denominator is the belief that Muhammad (bpuh) had authored the Qur'an despite himself. The three strands are the epileptic theory, the religious illusion theory and the subconscious theory.

⁶⁵ Bryan S. Turner, p. 37.

Section Eight

THE EPILEPTIC THEORY

The epileptic theory is probably the most problematic. In the *New Encyclopedia Britannica* epilepsy has been defined:

“Sudden and recurrent disturbances in mental function, state of consciousness, sensory activity, or movements of the body caused by paroxysmal malfunction of cerebral nerve cells.”⁶⁶

Under ‘type of seizures’ it mentions four categories: “Grand mal, petit mal, psychomotor and infantile spasms.”

Grand mal ‘includes generalized convulsions in which there is sudden unconsciousness with falling and shaking of limbs.’⁶⁷ This falling to the ground is sometimes preceded by a loud scream. After the body falls to the ground it stiffens and sometimes respiration stops, followed by jerky movements in all legs and hands. Sometimes during these seizures the tongue gets bitten because of the involuntary contractions of the muscles of jaws. As a person goes through this experience he feels disoriented, confused, sleepy and may experience headache. The person will have no recollection of what happened to him. It is obvious that these symptoms are not applicable to Muhammad⁶⁸ (Blessings and Peace be upon him).

⁶⁶ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1985), Vol. 4, p. 525.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ For a detailed description See: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976), Vol. 8 and under Epilepsy and Epileptic Fit, p. 654.

Petit Mal involves momentary lapses of awareness, and more than 70 percent of patients have their first attack before age 20. In Petit Mal there are no involuntary movements and it could therefore happen so many times in a single day without interruption of consciousness. It is difficult to see how Petit Mal can be equated with Muhammad's revelation. Revelation came to him at 40 and revelation took several minutes as opposed to the momentary lapses of Petit Mal. Moreover revelation could never go unnoticed.

Psychomotor and focal seizures may involve generalized convulsions. 'Focal onset may be manifested by localized movements or sensations of a part of the body or by subjectively experienced warnings called auras that last from a fraction of a second to a few seconds. Auras arising from specific areas of the brain include illusions that the environment is strangely familiar, auditory or visual hallucinations, ringing in the ears, and unpleasant odours or tastes.'⁶⁹ Again psychomotor seizures have nothing in common with Muhammad's revelation. Moreover, the Qur'an which was recited by Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) is available today. When examined it does not look like the weird screams and mumbling of an epileptic.

There could yet be other forms of epilepsy not known to medical science. Even then it would still be a case of a disease and would thus have affected his mental faculties making him incapable of thought control. But every time Muhammad (bpuh) received a revelation he would be in complete control of himself and was completely able to recall everything after and have it recorded accordingly. He was so sure he even had this recorded in the Qur'an (75: 16-19).

In fact the Qur'an is so easy to remember that if one gathers any small number of sincere Muslims together it is possible to repeat the

⁶⁹ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1985), Vol. 4, p. 525.

Qur'an from their collected memories. The Qur'an says the same thing in (54: 17). This, irrespective of whether these people understand Arabic or not.

Section Nine

THE RELIGIOUS ILLUSION THEORY

Since problems attending the religious illusion theory apply equally well to the subconscious theory we shall, here, below, treat them interchangeably.

Both theories assume that the Qur'an had actually emanated from Muhammad's knowledge, imagination, experiences and environment, although he himself was not aware of this fact. The difficulty which seems to controvert these theories is the fact that there are numerous statements in the Qur'an that could not have emanated from his consciousness or subconsciousness. We shall cite examples dealing with historical events, future events and other psychological considerations.

One example is chapter 18 of the Qur'an which was sent down in answer to the three questions which the *mushriks* (idolaters) of Makkah, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put to the Holy Prophet in order to test him. These were:

1. Who were 'the Sleepers of the Cave'?
2. What is the real story of Khidr? And,
3. What do you know about Dhul-Qarnayn?

As these three questions... concerned the history of the Christians and the Jews, and were unknown in Hijaz, a choice of these was made to test whether the Holy Prophet possessed any source of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen things.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Martin Lings, Op. cit, p. 77 and S.A.A. Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, (Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 1984), Part 7, p. 4.

When the three questions were put to him, “He said, ‘Tomorrow I will tell you.’ But he did not say, ‘If God will,’ and when they came for the answers he had to put them off and so it went on day by day until fifteen nights had passed and still he had received no Revelation of any kind...” The people of Makkah taunted him, and he was distressed by what they said and greatly saddened that he had not received the help he had hoped for. Then Gabriel brought him a Revelation reproaching him for his distress on account of what his people said, and telling him the answers to their questions. The long wait he had to endure was explained in the words of the Qur’an:

﴿وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَٰلِكَ غَدًا﴾ (٢٣) إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ... ﴿٢٤﴾
 (سورة الكهف: ٢٣-٢٤)

“And say not of anything, ‘Verily I shall do that tomorrow, except you say if God will...’” (Qur’an 18: 23-24)⁷¹

Discussing the significance of this rather long delay, Martin Lings says:

“But the delay of this Revelation, although painful to the Prophet and his followers, was in reality an added strength. His worst enemies refused to draw conclusions from it, but for those Quraysh who were in two minds it was a powerful corroboration of his claim that the Revelation came to him from Heaven and that he had no part in it and no control over it. Was it conceivable that if Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had invented the earlier Revelations he could have delayed so long before inventing this latest one, especially when so much appeared to be at stake?”⁷²

⁷¹ It is from these verses that Muslims have learned to say ‘*Insha’-Allah*’ whenever they make promises about the future.

⁷² Martin Lings, *Op. cit.*, p. 77. For further details about the three questions see *Ibid.*, Pp. 77-78.

The point worth considering here is that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was asked about specific events. It is difficult to conceive how religious illusions could have helped him to make the correct replies which completely silenced his critics. What is even more striking, while narrating about the duration which the Sleepers stayed in the Cave, the Qur'an says:

﴿وَلَبِثُوا فِي كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِينَ وَازْدَادُوا تِسْعًا﴾

(سورة الكهف: ٢٥)

"So they stayed in their Cave three hundred years and [some] add nine [more]." (Qur'an 18: 25)

The wording is quite significant. The verse does not say "three hundred and nine years" but uses the apparently cumbersome wording of "three hundred years and (some) add nine (more)". Why (some) add nine (more)? This is because their stay was 300 years if one used the solar calendar and 309 years by the lunar calendar. The lunar year is 11 days shorter. Now 11 days times 300 years divided by 365 is 9 years. The argument that such amazingly accurate calculations spring from the subconscious or are mere hallucinations does not seem to offer a satisfactory explanation.

Another example can be found in chapter 89 of the Qur'an which mentions an ancient city called *Iram*:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ ﴿٧﴾ الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿٨﴾﴾

(سورة الفجر: ٦-٨)

"See you not how your Lord dealt with the 'Ad [people], of the [city of] Iram, with lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in [all] the land?" (Qur'an 89: 6-8)

Apart from its being mentioned in the Qur'an, there were no historical records about this city, the name itself was obscure, even during the time of the Prophet himself. This led to a number of speculations about its possible geographical location. Some commentators of the Qur'an went to the extent of suggesting that probably *Iram* was the name of an eponymous hero of the 'Ād'.⁷³

The research findings published by the official journal of the American National Geographic Society, *The National Geographic* (December 1978) have conclusively shown that *Iram* was a city. In 1975 Dr. Paolo Matthiae of the University of Rome, director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria, 'hit an archaeological jackpot'. In the ruins of a palace apparently destroyed in the 23rd century B.C., he came upon the greatest third millennium archive ever unearthed. More than 15,000 cuneiform tablets'... were discovered. Among the rich details revealed by these tablets is the fact that Ebla used to have trading links with *Iram*:

Also included is *Iram*, an obscure city referred to in *Sūrah* 89 of the Qur'an.⁷⁴

It is inconceivable that the subconscious or religious illusions could have been the guide which helped Muhammad (Blessings and

⁷³ 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, (trans.) *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, (Jeddah: Islamic Education Centre, 1946), Footnote No. 6114, p. 1732.

⁷⁴ Howard La Fay, "*Ebla: Splendour of an Unknown Empire*" in *National Geographic*, (Washington: National Geographic Society, Dec. 1978), Vol. 154, No. 6, Pp. 731-759. The above quotations appear on p. 737. The findings have also confirmed the position held by Muslim scholars that Abraham's epic journey occurred about 2300 B.C. as opposed to the year 1800 B.C. held by most biblical scholars. Asked about the importance of the Ebla tablets, Dr. Giovanni Pettinato former epigraphist of the Italian Mission said: "Remember this: all the other texts of this period recovered to date do not total a fourth of those from Ebla," p. 735.

Peace be upon him) describe so accurately in the Qur'an the physical features and the level of architecture of a people who lived in an ancient city which was destroyed 3,000 years before he was born!

Moreover the Qur'an itself declares in several places that neither Muhammad (bpuh) nor his people had ever known about some of those stories before they were revealed in the Qur'an:

﴿تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ
مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَقِيبَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (سورة هود: ٤٩)

"Such are some of the stories of the Unseen, which We have revealed unto you: Before this, neither you nor your people knew them. So persevere patiently: For the End is for those who are righteous." (Qur'an 11: 49)

It is significant that no one ever stood up to say, "You are grossly mistaken, O' Muhammad. I am an Arab like you and I knew about these stories even before this revelation." It would also appear that Muhammad (bpuh) was taking an unnecessarily suicidal risk by reciting the above verse. Even if we assume that he had actually known those stories before but was merely feigning ignorance, (and in that case he could not be the only one to know them) how could he be so boldly definite about the ignorance of others? Even if what he said of them was true, his enemies could have easily exploited the situation to contradict him especially since the statement came after he had already told them the story. Yet no one used that opportunity! The subconscious is defined in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* as "the hidden level of the mind and the thoughts that go on there, beyond conscious knowledge". The above Qur'anic statement is conscious, bold and definite. How could Muhammad (bpuh) have known so accurately and beforehand that even if he made such a bold statement no one including his enemies would ever think of using it against him?

Secondly, the fact that the Qur'an had made definite statements about future events, and all of which came to pass, weakens the idea that the Qur'an is the product of Muhammad's experience. To cite but just two examples, the Qur'an in chapter 30 verses 1-7 (which were revealed in 615 A.D.) clearly states that even though the Roman Empire has been defeated by the Persians, they will nevertheless, within a few years, be victorious. The Arabic word used to describe "a few years" is *bidh 'i* which means between 3-9 years. And this is precisely what happened. Seven years after the prophecy the Romans defeated the Persians. What is equally stunning, the prophecy says, "*On that day the believers would also be victorious*", and simultaneously the Muslims were celebrating over the Quraysh in the Battle of Badr, as Hingora says:

"Accordingly, this prophecy was exactly fulfilled when Heraclius defeated the Persians at the decisive battle of Issus in 622 C.E. and the Romans victoriously entered the heart of Persia in 624 C.E.. Exactly in the same year the Muslims gained victory over the Meccan Pagans at Badr and the believers 'rejoiced on that day' as prophesied in the Qur'an."⁷⁵

Another example appears in chapter (111: 1-4) where the Qur'an states explicitly that Abu Lahab, the uncle of the Prophet, would die a disbeliever. Concerning Abu Lahab, Thomas Patrick Hughes writes:

"He was a most bitter enemy of the Prophet, and opposed the establishment of Islam to the utmost of his power... When

⁷⁵ Q.1. Hingora: *The Prophecies of the Holy Qur'an*, (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1976), p. 48. For further details see 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, Appendix, X, Pp. 1069-1076. Other prophecies include those in (54: 45) on Badr, (44: 10-16) on Famine, (68: 15-16) on Walid ibn Mughira to be hit on his snout etc.

Muhammad received the command to admonish his relations, he called them all together and told them he was a warner sent unto them before a grievous chastisement. Abu Lahab rejected his mission, and cried out, 'Mayest thou perish! Hast thou called us together for this?' and took up a stone to cast at him whereupon the 109th *Sūrah* of the Qur'an was produced."⁷⁶

Abu Lahab died a disbeliever 11 years after the Qur'anic revelation. In view of the fact that he was Muhammad's bitterest enemy, logic and experience suggest that it is unwise to make such a declaration, for Abu Lahab could have very easily disproved the Qur'an by pretending to believe. Why did Abu Lahab waste this golden opportunity? What made Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) so certain that even in ten years Abu Lahab would not exploit this tempting opportunity? At any rate experience does not include knowledge of the future.

There are also psychological considerations which weaken the subconscious theory. It is the tendency of the subconscious to suppress or attribute to others some incriminating or unacceptable feelings. If the Qur'an were the product of the subconscious it would not have contained corrections or blames on the Prophet himself. The first ten verses of chapter 80 of the Qur'an, for example, reproach the Prophet's attitude towards Ibn Umm Maktūm. Describing the incident Syed Quṭb says:

⁷⁶ Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, (London: W.H. Allen and Co. 1895), p. 8. Another instance of his enmity was shown when it was decided on grounds of tribal loyalties, under the leadership of Abu Ṭālib to protect the Prophet from persecution despite their rejection of the religion he was preaching. Abu Lahab was the only one among the Hashimi clan (the Prophet's own clan) who refused, and joined enemy clans. He also ordered his two sons to renounce the daughters of Muhammad, to whom they had been engaged before Muhammad's prophethood, so as to exert psychological pressure on him. See Sayyid Quṭb (trans.), *In the shade of the Qur'an*, (London: MWH publishers, 1979) Vol. 30, Pp. 344-345.

“The Prophet (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was busy with a few dignitaries of the tribe of Quraysh, explaining to them the message of Islam, when Ibn Maktūm, a poor blind man, interrupted him. Unaware that the Prophet was busy with those people, the blind man asked him repeatedly to teach him some verses of the Qur’an. The Prophet (bpuh) was not very pleased at this interruption. He frowned and turned away from Ibn Maktūm. This *Sūrah* opens by criticizing the Prophet’s behaviour in this incident.”⁷⁷

In chapter 8 verses 67-68 the Qur’an also blames the Prophet on the decision made about the 70 Prisoners of War held after the battle of Badr.⁷⁸ These are not the only examples. It is inconceivable that such blames should be the product of his own subconscious.

Other psychological aspects which are difficult to explain include the fact that normally when one is angry it takes some time for one to cool down. However we find in the Qur’an the blame and forgiveness are in the same breath. Apart from the above references another example appears in chapter 9 verse 43 where the blame is preceded by the forgiveness:

﴿عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذْنَتْ لَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الْذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٣)

“Allah give you grace! Why did you grant them exemption until those who told the truth were seen by you in a clear light and you had proved the liars?”

(Qur’an 9: 43)

⁷⁷ Syed Quṭb (trans.), *In the Shade of the Qur’an*, Vol. 30, p. 39.

⁷⁸ For a detailed account see S.A.A. Mawdudi, Op. cit, (Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 1982), Part 4, Explanatory Note 49, Pp. 150-151.

Again there was the case of the hypocrites who spread a malicious rumour against the chastity and moral integrity of the Prophet's wife, 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). The Prophet was very much distressed by the spreading rumour but endured it for one month without saying a word. Eventually Revelation came and exposed the evil intentions of the hypocrites and cleared 'Ā'ishah.⁷⁹ That Qur'anic revelation could not have removed the psychological distress of the Prophet if he himself were the author. And if the Qur'an was the product of his own subconscious it would not have taken so long in coming.

It is also significant that the Prophet could not defend the rationale for signing the Treaty of Hudaibiyah until its wisdom was revealed by the Qur'an later.⁸⁰

Another difficulty which cannot be resolved by the subconscious theory is the fact that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had also made voluminous other statements which are not part of the Qur'an. And quite significantly there is marked difference between the two, in fact they are incomparable. Whereas the Qur'an contains challenge for mankind to produce anything similar to it, the hadith doesn't. Though highly eloquent, the hadiths are not inimitable. Drawing attention to this fact, H.A.R. Gibbs says in *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*:

"An even more striking instance is furnished by his address at the 'Farewell Pilgrimage', when he visited Makkah for the last time; for this too, in spite of its religious content and the solemnity of the occasion, is not in the Qur'an... Whatever the psychological explanation may be, it is difficult to resist the

⁷⁹ For additional details see Martin Lings, Op. cit, Pp. 240-241. See also the Qur'an (48: 1-6).

⁸⁰ For details of the Treaty see Martin Lings, Op. cit, Pp. 252-255.

conclusion that the term revelation was confined to those utterances which were not consciously produced and controlled by the Prophet and seemed to him to have been put into his mouth from without.”⁸¹

We have so far attempted to show that the first logical possibility concerning the authorship of the Qur'an, namely: Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was the conscious or unconscious composer of the Qur'an is rationally indefensible. We may now examine the second logical possibility; that Muhammad (bpuh) was not the author, but merely copied it from other authors or sources.

⁸¹ H.A.R. Gibbs, *Mohammedanism: A Historical Survey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961, Pp. 43-44.

Section Ten

FROM THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SOURCES

In his *Islam and the West: A Historical Survey*, Philip K. Hitti says,

“The sources of the Qur’an are unmistakable: Christian, Jewish and Arab heathen.”⁸²

He supports this assertion by pointing out that during the Prophet’s time paintings of Jesus and Mary were on the inner wall of the Ka’bah. That the Qur’anic material has been drawn second hand from hearsay is demonstrated by the Qur’anic statement that Jesus spoke unto mankind in the cradle and fashioned out of clay a living bird. These statements have a parallel in the apocryphal Gospel of Infancy. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is confused with Mary, sister of Aaron, and Haman, favourite of Ahusuerus (Esth. 3:2) is mistakenly made minister of the Pharaoh (Qur’an 40: 36). And the Qur’anic story of the “two-horned” Alexander the Great ‘must have originated in the Romance of Alexander then current among Syrian Christians’.⁸³

However, according to Richard Bell,

“In spite of traditions to the effect that the picture of Jesus was found on one of the pillars of the Ka’bah, there is no good

⁸² Philip K. Hitti, *Islam and the West: A Historical Survey*, p. 15.

⁸³ Ibid, Pp. 16-17.

evidence of any seats of Christianity in the Hijaz or in the near neighbourhood of Makkah or even of Madinah.”⁸⁴

Hitti’s argument is that although certain Qur’anic passages bear resemblance to biblical passages they do not warrant the conclusion of borrowing or quoting. Comparable passages cited include *Sūrah* (21: 104) with Isaiah 34:4, *Sūrah* (53: 39-42) with Ezekiel 18:20; *Sūrah* (53: 45) with Samuel 2:6, *Sūrah* (1: 5) “Guide us in the straight path” with Psalm 27:1 “and lead us in a plain path” may be explained on other grounds than direct dependence.⁸⁵ His explanation is that ‘far from being a slavish imitator, Muhammad Islamized, Arabicized and nationalized the material’.⁸⁶

On the sources of the Qur’an, J. Christy Wilson writes in *Introducing Islam*,

“Scholars hold that a number of (Qur’anic stories) may be traced to Jewish Talmudic sources and apocryphal gospels rather than to the Old and New Testaments.”⁸⁷

Wilson also mentions the apparent confusion over Haman and Mary.

Richard Bell argues in his book, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*:

“Much of the Qur’an is directly dependent upon the Bible, and stories associated with the Bible.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*: The Gunning Lectures, Edinburgh University, 1925, (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1926), p. 42.

⁸⁵ Philip K. Hitti, *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁸⁷ J. Christy Wilson, *Introducing Islam*, (New York: Friendship Press, 1950), Pp. 30-31.

⁸⁸ Richard Bell, *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

His knowledge of the Bible was acquitted gradually:

“The key to a great deal both in the Qur'an and in the career of Muhammad lies... in his gradual acquisition of knowledge of what the Bible contained and of what Jews and Christians believed... We shall see him consciously borrowing — he is quite frank about it.”⁸⁹

The Qur'anic references to the People of the Cave, Moses and al-Khidr and Alexander the Great which were never associated with the Bible, are cited by Bell as proof that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was not working on any real knowledge of the Bible itself but was dependent on third-hand oral sources. Bell also mentions Muhammad's apparent confusion of Mary, the mother of Jesus with Miriam the sister of Moses.

Kenneth Cragg says in, *The Call of the Minaret*:

“The Biblical narratives reproduced in the Qur'an differ considerably and suggest oral, not direct acquaintance. There is an almost complete absence of what could be claimed as direct quotation from either Testament.”⁹⁰

Cragg is convinced that the Qur'anic apparent misconceptions as to the Trinity and Jesus indicate that the range or quality of Muhammad's oral contacts was insufficient to enable him have a firm grasp of Christianity.⁹¹

H.A.R. Gibb in *Mohamedanism: An Historical Survey*, puts forward another possibility concerning the sources of the Qur'an:

“In view of the close commercial relation between Mecca and the Yemen it would be natural to assume that some religious

⁸⁹ Richard Bell, Op. cit, Pp. 68-69.

⁹⁰ Kenneth Cragg, Op. cit, p. 74.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 263.

ideas were carried to Mecca with the caravans of spices and woven stuffs, and there are details of vocabulary in the Qur'an which give colour to this assumption.⁹²

Lyndon P. Harries writes in his book, *Islam in East Africa*:

"Muhammad himself borrowed from the Bible, and Muslims today, consciously or not, borrow much from Christian ideology even in matters which the Qur'an does not support."⁹³

According to R.A. Nicholson the Qur'an can be traced to the Hanif and Judeo-Christian sources:

"We hear much of Christian hermits and also a few persons known as hanifs, who had rejected idolatry for a religion of their own, ascetic and monotheistic; Muhammad appears to have been in touch with some of them before his call... His journeys with the trading caravans of Mecca afforded opportunities for conversation with Jews and Christians, of which the Qur'an preserves the result."⁹⁴

Nicholson goes on to say:

"Muhammad picked up all his knowledge of this kind by hearsay, and he makes a brave show with such borrowed trappings — largely consisting of legends from the Haggada and the Apocrypha."⁹⁵

Concerning Jewish and Christian influence on the Qur'an, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* writes:

⁹² H.A.R. Gibb, Op. cit, Pp. 37-38.

⁹³ Lyndon P. Harries, *Islam in East Africa* (London: Universities' Mission of Central Africa, 1954), p. 57.

⁹⁴ R. A. Nicholson, Introduction to E.H. Palmer's (trans.) *The Koran*, p. ix.

⁹⁵ R.A. Nicholson, *Introduction*, p. xviii.

“Non Moslem scholarship, has nearly always held that the major influences on Muhammad must have been principally, but not exclusively, Jewish and Christian, and that those influences were coloured by Muhammad’s own character and made over to conform to aspects and needs of the pre-Islamic Arabian mind.”⁹⁶

It goes on to say:

“Very probably Muhammad had heard improvised translation of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.”⁹⁷

At the outset, this theory is defective to the extent it shares with the previous theory the assumption that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had deceitfully lied or was insanely mistaken when he attributed the Qur'an to a divine source. We have already shown the weaknesses of this assumption. Another difficulty is presented by Muhammad's life — long illiteracy. For as the Qur'an suggests, had Muhammad (bpuh) been literate many critics would have doubted the truth of his claim.⁹⁸ But since he was unlettered it is inconceivable that he could have gathered all the materials from the Hanifs, Jews, Christians and from other pagan sources and then recast the material and recite it orally for 23 years in the sublime language of the Qur'an without the aid of a pen. Thirdly, Muhammad (bpuh) grew up in an environment that was predominantly idolatrous and the Qur'an is uncompromisingly monotheistic.

There was indeed a handful of non-pagans in Makkah who used to call themselves “Hanifs” and who did not participate in idol worship. But they had neither church nor scripture. There is no record even of their beliefs. Similarly there may have been some Christians

⁹⁶ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, p. 677, (1981).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ The Qur'an, (29: 48).

in Makkah but their percentage was certainly very negligible. In fact Muhammad's critics never thought of accusing him to have learned the Qur'an from the Hanifs or the Christians but they accused him of learning it from a Roman blacksmith in the outskirts of Makkah. He used to go and watch him do his work. The Qur'an dismissed this charge by pointing out that the man they pointed to spoke a foreign tongue and the Qur'an was in pure Arabic:

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَبِي وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾﴾

(سورة التحل: ١٠٣)

"We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him.' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear."

(Qur'an 16: 103)

By the way, to which group should we attribute the above verse? Could it be the Jews or Christians who are defending the Qur'an here?

Muhammad's (bpuh) contacts with Jewish or Christian scholars was very limited. He met with Waraqa ibn Nawfal twice. Waraqa was an old man who was blind during the last years of his life, and a relative of Khadijah, the Prophet's wife. Even though of Arabic descent Waraqa became a Christian and had some knowledge of the New Testament. Their first encounter occurred when Waraqa was going round the Ka'bah and saw Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him). He affectionately kissed his head. The second meeting was after Muhammad (bpuh) had received the first revelation. Waraqa died three years later and revelation continued for 23 years.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Hafiz G. Sarwar, Op. cit, Pp. 70-72.

There were also Christians living in Najran, in Yemen (South of Makkah) and to the north there lived some Jews in Yathrib which was later known as Madinah. There is no record whatsoever that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had ever travelled to Najran before or after his prophethood. Muhammad (bpuh) had not gone to Madinah before his prophethood except once. When he was six years old he accompanied his mother to visit a relative, from Banu Najjar and to let Muhammad (bpuh) visit the grave of his father who had died while Muhammad (bpuh) was in the womb of his mother.¹⁰⁰ Again it is too wild a speculation to imagine that at the age of six and within a day or two he could have learned all the 66 or 73 books of the Bible. At any rate the distance between Makkah and Madinah is hundreds of kilometers and was accessible at that time neither by aeroplane nor car but a camel and it took weeks. Muhammad (bpuh) could not have shuttled between the two cities unnoticed. It would seem that the existence of such communities could not be the source of the Qur'an.

Some scholars have also mentioned the fact that Muhammad (bpuh) used to have discussions with Jews and Christians but without specifying when those discussions took place thus giving the impression that the Qur'an is the result of those discussions. Those discussions indeed took place but long after the Qur'an had started being revealed. In fact all discussions were held in Madinah while Muhammad (bpuh) began receiving revelation in Makkah and had stayed there for 13 years, and during that period about two-thirds of the Qur'an had already been revealed. Even the Qur'an itself, has mentioned those discussions. Verses 33-63 of chapter 3 of the Qur'an for example were revealed in the 9th year of his migration to Madinah, on the occasion of the visit of the deputation from the Christians of Najran.

¹⁰⁰ S.A.A. Mawdudi, *Op. cit*, Part 2, p. 207.

Secondly the context of those meetings is often ignored. He did not meet them as a student but as a teacher, and used the opportunity to correct their dogmas, like their belief in Trinity.

All historical records available show that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had made 3 trips outside Makkah before his prophethood. At the age of six he accompanied his mother to Madinah. Between the age of 9 and 12 he accompanied his uncle, Abu Ṭālib, on a business trip to Syria. And in the last trip, Muhammad (bpuh) was 25 and led Khadijah's caravan again to Syria.¹⁰¹

As Jamal Badawi says,

“It would be highly imaginary to say that through his occasional chats with Jews and Christians, while busy with his caravan, Muhammad (bpuh) learned enough about either or both religions to formulate a new powerful and viable religion, a task that defies the collective efforts of scholars for centuries.”¹⁰²

Furthermore, the above assertion raises a number of questions. Jamal Badawi puts forth the following six questions:

1. Why is it, that in spite of the abundance of historical material on Muhammad's life, and in spite of the extensive research on his life for centuries by his severe critics, why was it not possible to discover that mysterious teacher(s) through whom Muhammad (bpuh) might have learned all that?
2. It is known that Muhammad (bpuh) was opposed, ridiculed, and persecuted for nearly thirteen years by his own contemporaries. With this magnitude of severe enemies, was it not possible for them to prove to the masses that Muhammad's claim of revelation was sheer

¹⁰¹ Hafiz G. Sarwar, *Op. cit.*, Pp. 51, 59.

¹⁰² Jamal A. Badawi, *Op. cit.*, Pp. 17, (1981).

fabrication? Was it not possible for them to reveal and name which they alleged to be the human source or sources of his teachings? Even some of his adversaries who made this assertion changed their minds later on and accused him, instead, of magic or of being possessed by evil... etc.

3. Muhammad (bpuh) was raised among his people and every aspect of his life was exposed to them, especially by the openness that characterizes tribal life in the desert. How could the multitudes of his contemporaries, including many of his close relatives who knew him so well, how could they believe in his truthfulness if they had any doubt that he was claiming credit for ideas taught to him by some other teachers without bothering to give them credit?

4. What kind of teacher might have taught Muhammad (bpuh) a coherent and complete religion that changed the face of history? Why didn't he or they (if any) speak against the alleged student who continued learning from them, while ignoring them and claiming some other divine source for his teachings?

5. How could many Jews and Christians amongst his contemporaries become Muslims and believe in his truthfulness if they knew that he was copying from their scriptures or learning from their priests or rabbis?

6. It is known that some of the Qur'anic revelations came to Muhammad (bpuh) in the presence of people. The Qur'an was revealed on the span of twenty-three years, where, then, was that mysterious, perhaps, invisible human teacher of Muhammad (bpuh)? How could he have hidden himself for so long? Or how could Muhammad (bpuh) who was constantly surrounded by followers, how was he able to make frequent secret visits to that mysterious teacher or teachers for twenty-three years without being caught even once?¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Jamal A. Badawi, *Op. cit.*

Section Eleven

THE PROBLEM OF PARALLELS

With a view to showing the influence of Judeo-Christian traditions on the Qur'an some scholars have pointed out parallels in the Bible and the Qur'an. The implication is that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) had carefully studied previous scriptures and selected or "borrowed" those portions which appeared consistent to him. This theory is greatly weakened by the following points.

First, Muhammad (bpuh) said that the Qur'an came from Allah and we have already attempted to show that from historical, psychological and logical reasons Muhammad (bpuh) could not have fabricated that Qur'an.

Secondly, Muhammad (bpuh) was illiterate. He could not have studied and selected from previous scriptures without the ability to read and write.

Thirdly, the first Arabic version of the Old Testament appeared two hundred years after the death of Muhammad (bpuh), and the Oldest Arabic version of the New Testament appeared a thousand years after the departure of Muhammad (bpuh). In his discussion about "The Sources of the Qur'an", Thomas Patrick Hughes writes in *A Dictionary of Islam*:

"We have no evidence that Muhammad had access to the Christian scriptures... It should also be borne in mind that we have no clear traces of the existence of Arabic versions of the Old or New Testament previous to the time of Muhammad.

The earliest Arabic version of the Old Testament of which we have any knowledge is that of R. Sadias Gaon A.D. 900; and the oldest Arabic version of the New Testament is that published by Erpenius in 1616.”¹⁰⁴

Fourthly, similarity between any two compositions or books does not in itself constitute sufficient evidence that one was copied from the other, or the latter from the earlier one. Both of them could be based on a common third source. And this is precisely the argument of the Qur'an. There are certain portions of the Bible that might have remained intact and if God is the source of both revelations that should explain the existence of parallels.

Fifthly, a close examination of the two text would clearly show that the idea of borrowing is at best flimsy. Let's begin with the basic differences between the two books:

The Bible is not one Book but a collection of at least 66 Books according to the Protestant version or 75 according to the Roman Catholic Douay Version written by at least 40 authors. Secondly, the Bible is a mixture of both divine statements and human commentaries of later followers. See for example Jeremiah 8: 8; Luke 1: 1-4, and I Corinthians 7: 25. The Qur'an has no such commentaries. Even the words of Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) himself are not part of the Qur'an. Thirdly, in the New Testament the Four Gospels teach about Jesus, his life and mission. The Qur'an is not a biography of Muhammad (bpuh) written by his followers. Fourthly, The Bible has several books written many years after the death of those prophets sometimes not in the original language of those prophets, thus giving rise to a number of difficulties in analysis. The entire Qur'an was written during the lifetime of the Prophet and it was memorized by hundreds of people in the original language.

¹⁰⁴ Under Sources of the Qur'an, Thomas Patrick Hughes writes in Op. cit., Pp. 515-516, (1895).

Fifthly, the four canonized gospels were not the only gospels, the decision of what should be in the Bible and what should not was (and still is,) left to human judgement. In Islam there were no conferences to determine which *Sūrah* should be or not be in the Qur'an.

The idea that the Qur'an had borrowed from the Bible is further undermined by the existence of basic creedal differences between the two texts. The similarities are superficial. The following are some of those differences:

The Biblical concept of God is quite different from the Qur'anic one. In the Bible, God is described in a human form.¹⁰⁵ In Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:11, He is depicted as the one who gets tired and needs rest. For his tendency to forget see Genesis 8:1 and Exodus 2:24 and compare these passages with the Qur'an (2: 255). God walks in the garden and a man can hide himself from Him; and to seek him out from his hiding place God has to search him.¹⁰⁶ Like a human being, God is depicted in the Bible as being sorry for some of His decisions, the implication being that he was either ignorant of the consequences or that He is subject to whimsical moods.¹⁰⁷ In Exodus 34:14, and Exodus 20:5, He is described as jealous and is referred to as the God of Israel. Nowhere in the Qur'an God is described as the God of Qurayshites, the God of Arabs or the God of Muslims.¹⁰⁸ Like a human being, God has nostrils, a mouth and dwells in thick

¹⁰⁵ Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'" or in Genesis 9:6, "For God made man in his own image". Compare these passages with the Qur'an which says: "*Say He is God, the One and Only God, the Eternal, Absolute. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.*" (Qur'an 112: 1-4) or "*There is nothing comparable to Him*" (Qur'an 42: 11).

¹⁰⁶ Genesis 3:8-11. Compare this with the Qur'an (2: 115) and (6: 3).

¹⁰⁷ Genesis 6:6, Judge 2:18 and Exodus 32:14, Compare theses passages with the Qur'an (2: 255) and (6: 59).

¹⁰⁸ See the Qur'an (1: 1) and (4: 79).

darkness.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes as stated in Exodus 12:13, He even needs man's guidance. He is also afraid of man's power and unity.¹¹⁰ In fact according to Genesis 32:24-29 Jacob had actually defeated God in a wrestling match. Such depictions are not only absent in the Qur'an, but they are also regarded as sacrilegious to the Majesty of Allah. The Biblical concept of prophethood is also radically different from the one presented in the Qur'an. The Qur'an depicts prophets as the best models of piety and moral uprightness, see the Qur'an (21: 27) and (22: 52). In the biblical version, almost all prophets seem to commit major sins in faith and moral standing. Some of the shameful deeds attributed to prophets include Aaron's idol worship,¹¹¹ Solomon's inclination towards idolatry¹¹² and Jacob's deceitful tricks towards his father Isaac.¹¹³ Abraham had either contracted an incestuous marriage with Sarah or he was simply an ignoble liar.¹¹⁴ The drunken Prophet Lot committed incest with his daughters and he is also reported to have given out his daughters to the lustful men of Gomorrah and invited them to do with his daughters as they pleased.¹¹⁵ Prophet David was not only a peeping Tom, but actually committed adultery with the wife of Uriah, and had the husband killed.¹¹⁶ Judas committed incest with his daughter-in-law. Pharez and Zarah who were the result of that incest are honoured as the great grandfathers and great grandmothers of Jesus.¹¹⁷ It would appear as if God blesses Judas for his incestuous crime. Jesus is reported to

¹⁰⁹ 2 Samuel 22:9-15, 1 Kings 8:12 and Numbers 11:25.

¹¹⁰ Genesis 11:5-9, Gen. 3:22-24.

¹¹¹ Exodus 32:1-20.

¹¹² 1 Kings 11:4.

¹¹³ Genesis 27:16.

¹¹⁴ Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:2-18.

¹¹⁵ Genesis 19:30-38 and Gen. 19:8.

¹¹⁶ 2 Samuel 11:2-5, 11:15-18.

¹¹⁷ Genesis 38:16-18 and Mathew 1:3.

have rebuffed his own mother when he said, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?'¹¹⁸ The Qur'an accuses no prophet of any of the above charges.

There are also creedal differences concerning belief in the Hereafter, the concept of Salvation and orientation towards life."¹¹⁹

Apart from doctrinal differences there are also major variations even in stories common to both, the Qur'an and the Bible. By way of example we shall cite the story of Adam and Eve. The similarities between the two versions are that both Books say Adam and Eve were the first human beings to be created. They lived in a garden and were permitted to eat from any tree except one tree. They succumbed to the temptations of Satan and ate from the forbidden tree and they were sent to live on earth.

The following are the major differences between the two accounts:

1. The Bible says it was a tree of knowledge, the Qur'an makes no such mention. According to the Qur'an, man is inherently inspired with the knowledge of good and evil and Adam was taught the nature of all things even before his disobedience.¹²⁰
2. In the Biblical account woman carries the burden of that mistake and by way of punishment God multiplied her agony in childbirth. There is not a single verse in the Qur'an which suggests or implies, in any way, that the woman bears primary responsibility for that mistake. Pregnancy is described in the Qur'an as noble and praiseworthy.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ John 2:4.

¹¹⁹ For a detailed discussion about these issues refer to G. Miller, *Missionary Christianity*, Pp. 1-38.

¹²⁰ Genesis 2:16-17, Cf. The Qur'an, (91: 7-8), (2: 31-33).

¹²¹ Genesis 3:12-17, Cf. The Qur'an (29: 8), (46: 15).

3. In the Bible, Eve is tempted by Satan who takes the form of a serpent. The Qur'an says Satan tempted both of them and there is no mention at all of serpent, viper or snake.¹²²

4. After their disobedience, the Bible does not at all mention that Adam and Eve repented, whereas the Qur'an emphasizes this point. According to the Qur'an, they repented and God forgave them.¹²³

5. The Bible suggests that their coming to live on earth was a sort of punishment, while the Qur'an says that their coming was part of God's plan even before He created them.¹²⁴

The above differences have very serious doctrinal implications. The biblical tree of knowledge implies that man was perfect before eating from the tree but his nature changed after eating from it. According to the Qur'an, human beings are a blending of clay (which is the source of their weakness) and the soul. As a result, human beings have always been imperfect. While to the Christian, the problem is how to regain that previous perfection, in order to get salvation and come back to Paradise, the Qur'an expects man to have some lapses. The issue is whether he sincerely tries his best to fulfill the injunctions of God. While the Christian faith might admit the doctrine of original sin, the Qur'an says every child is born pure, and is only responsible for his own deeds. Whether as a result of original sin there must be blood shed to reconcile man with God, the Qur'an says, quite emphatically that God does not require bloodshed to forgive. And the idea that woman was responsible for the fall of man, has far reaching implications on the position and status of woman in society.

¹²² Genesis 3:1-7, Cf. The Qur'an, (2: 36), (7: 20).

¹²³ The Qur'an (2: 37), (7: 23).

¹²⁴ Genesis 3:17-19. Cf. The Qur'an (2: 30).

There are also major variations in the stories of the Prophets, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, Lot, Moses and Jesus.¹²⁵ The idea that the Qur'an has largely borrowed from the Bible, is certainly erroneous. In fact even those scholars who postulate the borrowing theory, like Philip Hitti, hasten to add that 'the resemblances do not warrant the conclusion of borrowing or quoting'. Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), they say, was not a slavish imitator.¹²⁶ The implication is that Muhammad (bpuh) had thoroughly grasped and internalized the Bible. He then excessively edited it, and recast it in his own words. Richard Bell is at pains to prove the direct dependence of Muhammad (bpuh) on the Bible. Yet, he also insists that Muhammad was 'not working on any real acquaintance with the Bible itself'.¹²⁷ Kenneth Cragg also says that 'Muhammad (bpuh) had no personal contact with the written Scriptures of either antecedent faith... There is an almost complete absence of what could be claimed as direct quotation from either Testament.'¹²⁸

The borrowing theory is further weakened by the presence in the Qur'an of stories or details which are absent in the Bible. The stories of the people of 'Ād and Thamud and their prophets Hood and Ṣaleḥ are not mentioned in the Bible. Some of the Qur'anic details which have no parallel in the Bible, include the dialogue which Prophet Noah had with his son before the Deluge, the dialogue between Abraham and his father and between Abraham and the tyrannical ruler Nimrod (Nebuchadnezzar). The miraculous escape of Abraham from the fire and the miracle of resurrection shown to him by God when he brought back to life, dead birds. Moses' slaughter of

¹²⁵ For a detailed account of the similarities and major variations in the two versions see 'Ali M.R. Muhajir, *Lessons from the Stories of the Qur'an*, (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. 1968).

¹²⁶ Philip K. Hitti, Op, cit, Pp. 17, 18, (1962).

¹²⁷ Richard Bell, Op, cit, p. 112.

¹²⁸ Kenneth Cragg, Op, cit, p. 74.

the cow in order to bring back to life a murdered man who mentioned his killer, is also absent in the Bible, and so is the long dialogue between Moses and the Israelites on what kind of animal should be slaughtered. Also absent in the Bible, are Jesus' miraculous speech in the cradle, and his fashioning out of clay a similitude of a bird, and Mary's miraculous sustenance from God.¹²⁹

Where did Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), get so many details which are absent in the Bible if the Qur'an was 'principally but not exclusively dependent on Jewish and Christian traditions?' Under 'Christianity in Arabia' the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* says that during the time of the Prophet, 'The Hejaz had not been touched by Christian preaching. Hence organization of the Christian church was neither to be expected nor found'.¹³⁰

Some scholars suggest that Muhammad (bpuh) had probably depended on oral sources, and they cite as evidence the apparent character confusion in the Qur'an between Mary, the mother of Jesus and Maryam the sister of Aaron. The basis of this charge is the Qur'anic verse which says while addressing Mary the mother of Jesus:

﴿يَتَّخِذَ هُنُورٌ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا﴾

(سورة مريم: ٢٨)

"O'sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!" (Qur'an 19: 28)

This claim is apparently mistaken because it disregards both the Arabic idiom and the context of the verse. In Arabic the word "akhun" or "ukhtun" carries two meanings: 1) blood brother or sister

¹²⁹ The Qur'an, (11: 32), (42: 19), (21: 57), (2: 258), (21: 69), (2: 260), (3: 46), (3: 49) and (3: 37).

¹³⁰ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, Pp. 721-722, (1981).

and 2) brotherhood in clan or faith. The above verse has used the word “*ukhtun*” in the second sense. This is not unusual. The Qur'an uses the same idiomatic expression in several other verses. In chapter 11 verse 78 Prophet Lot refers to the womenfolk of his community as “My daughters”. In chapter 7 verses 65, 73 and 85 Prophets Hood, Saleh and Shu'ayb are referred to as brothers of their respective peoples. The people of Lot are also mentioned in chapter 50 verse 13 as the brethren of Lot. Except for the word “*banāti*” which means “my daughters” in 11: 78, all other references have used the “*akhun*” which means “brother”. The address “O' sister of Aaron!” has also been used idiomatically in the sense of family lineage and not in the sense of actual parentage. In the Gospel of Luke for example Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah, is referred to as ‘of the daughters of Aaron’¹³¹ in the same sense of lineage.

Secondly, the context of the verse removes all doubts about the meaning of “O' sister of Aaron!” This exclamation was made when Mary went to her people carrying the babe Jesus in her arms:

“The amazement of the people knew no bounds. In any case they were prepared to think the worst of her, as she had disappeared from her kin for some time. But now she comes, shamelessly parading a babe in her arms! How she had disgraced the house of Aaron; the fountain of priesthood! Sister of Aaron: Mary is reminded of her high lineage and the unexceptionable morals of her father and mother. How, they said, she had fallen, and disgraced the name of her progenitors!”¹³²

¹³¹ Luke 1:5.

¹³² ‘Abdullah Y. ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur'an*, footnote Nos. 2480, 2481. See also the Qur'an (19: 27-30).

These reasons show that the exclamation ‘O’ sister of Aaron!’ cannot be taken as sufficient evidence of the oral sources of the Qur’an, nor can the alleged confusion over Haman.¹³³

Thirdly, the Qur’an is its own defence. Jewish, Christian or Pagan sources, would qualify as being “from other than God”. The Qur’an says in (4: 82) that there are no inconsistencies in the Qur’an. As long as this assertion of the Qur’an is not proved to the contrary all allegations of this type can have little value. For, in the final analysis, it may not matter at all, what imputations are, or are not heaped on the person, character and intentions of the Prophet. For, the truth and authenticity of his claim, can only be disproved if the message he brought with him is proved false, in any of the claims it puts forth, given the nature of the claim. The challenge to this effect, by the message itself, is open and eternal. Any attack on the person of the Messenger is peripheral to, and sidestepping the issue. Any serious critic of the Qur’an should establish the error, then explain the reasons for the error. Any other approach would be speculations on possibilities of error.

We have, so far, examined the first two logical possibilities concerning the authorship of the Qur’an. We have attempted to demonstrate the difficulties of rejecting the Qur’anic claim that it is a divine revelation. These difficulties, by themselves, do not prove that the Qur’an is the word of God. They merely show that Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) was not the author of the Qur’an and that the Qur’an is not a composite of oral and Judeo-Christian sources. Let us now examine the claim that the Qur’an is a divine revelation.

¹³³ See ‘Abdullah Y. ‘Ali, *The Holy Qur’an*, footnote No. 3331. For a detailed refutation on al-Khidr and Dhul-Qarnayn see S.A.A. Mawdudi, *The Meaning of the Qur’an*, Part 7, Pp. 35-49.

Section Twelve

THE THEORY OF DIVINE REVELATION

We noted earlier in this book, the Qur'anic claim, that even with the collective efforts of the whole mankind, it is impossible to produce the like of it. A close examination of the contents of the Qur'an, in the light of modern science, tends to support this claim. This has amply been demonstrated by Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French Roman Catholic scholar, in his celebrated work, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*. This claim is further reinforced by the amazing format of the Qur'an, as G. Miller says:

“As to numerical wonders and surprising aspects of the construction of the Qur'an, these are abundant, and most importantly, they are necessary. That is, the arrangement of words in the Qur'an is necessary, otherwise it would contain error.”¹³⁴

Areas of comparison between the Qur'an and the Bible in the light of modern science include the creation of the world and its stages; the date of creation of the world; the date of man's appearance on earth; the description of the flood, and the exodus.

1. The Bible in Genesis 1:3-5 says that day and night were created on the first day. The light circulating in the Universe is the result of the complex reactions in the stars, which according to the Bible were created on the Fourth day.

¹³⁴ G. Miller, Op. cit, p. 30.

“It is illogical to mention the result (light) on the first day when the cause of this light was created three days later. (Moreover) the existence of evening and morning as elements of a single day is only conceivable after the creation of the earth and its rotation under the light of its own star: the sun!”¹³⁵

The Qur'an does not give such a sequence.

2. In Genesis 1:9-13 we learn that ‘vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruits’ were created on the third day.

“What is totally untenable is that a highly organized vegetable kingdom with reproduction by seed could have appeared before the existence of the sun (in Genesis it does not appear until the fourth day), and likewise the establishment of alternating nights.”¹³⁶

Again the Qur'an makes no such description.

3. In Genesis 1:14-19 on the fourth day the sun, the moon and stars were created.

“Earth and moon emanated, as we know from their original star, the sun. To place the creation of the sun and moon after the creation of the Earth is contrary to the most firmly established ideas on the formation of the solar system.”¹³⁷

Bucaille goes on to enumerate several other sequential inconsistencies. The creation of the Universe according to the Bible took six days. The length of one day is apparently 24 hours and God rested on the *Sabbath*. The Qur'an has also mentioned six days but

¹³⁵ Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science: The Holy Scriptures Examined in the light of Modern knowledge*, (Paris: Seghers, 1981), p. 43. All further page references are to this edition.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 44.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

the Arabic word used is “*Ayyāmu*” the plural of “*Yawm*”. This word can mean either a 24 hour day or a very long period of time. The Qur'an says in chapter 32 verse 4 that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and in the following verse it says the measure of that day is equal to a thousand years of our reckoning. The Qur'an (50: 38) also rejects the idea of God resting on a *Sabbath*.¹³⁸

The Qur'anic verses on the creation of heavens and the earth include (79: 27-33), (21: 11), (2: 29), (23: 17), (71:15-16), (78: 12-13), (32: 4), (50: 38) and (25: 59). Concerning the basic process of the formation of the universe, for example, the Qur'an says:

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

(سورة الأنبياء: ٣٠)

“Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of waters. Will they not then believe?”
(Qur'an 21: 30)

In *Sūrah* 41 verse 11 the Qur'an says:

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ...﴾

(سورة فصلت: ١١)

“Moreover [God] turned to the Heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth...”
(Qur'an 41: 11)

¹³⁸ “*Sabbath*” in Hebrew means ‘to rest’.

Section Thirteen

SCIENTIFIC DATA

When the data in the Qur'an is measured against modern scientific discoveries the following points stand out very clearly:

“1. It must be noted... that the formation of heavenly bodies and the Earth, as explained in verses 9 to 12, *Sūrah* 41 required two phases. If we take the sun and its sub-product the Earth as an example (the only one accessible to us), science informs us that their formation occurred by a process of condensing of the primary nebula and then their separation. This is exactly what the Qur'an expresses very clearly when it refers to the process that produced a fusion and subsequent separation starting from celestial 'smoke'. Hence there is complete corresponding between the facts of the Qur'an and the facts of science.

2. Science showed the interlocking of the two stages in the formation of a star (like the sun) and its satellite (like the Earth). This interconnection is surely very evident in the text of the Qur'an examined.

3. The existence at an early stage of the universe of the 'smoke' referred to in the Qur'an, meaning predominantly gaseous state of the material that composes it, obviously corresponds with the concept of the primary nebula put forward by modern science.

4. The plurality of the heavens, expressed in the Qur'an by the number 7, whose meaning we have discussed, is confirmed by modern science due to the observations experts in astrophysics have made on galactic systems and their very large number.

5. The existence of an intermediate creation between ‘the heavens’ and ‘the earth’ expressed in the Qur’an may be compared to the discovery of those bridges of material present outside organized astronomic systems.”¹³⁹

The question worth considering here is how Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) living in the Arabian desert fourteen hundred years ago, could have edited the biblical description to such an extent that he managed to throw out all scientifically inaccurate statements, and on his own initiative add other statements that science has only recently been able to verify?

Another major area of comparison is the date of the appearance of man on earth. Using the genealogical data in chapters 4, 5, 11, 21, and 25 of the Sacerdotal text of Genesis it may be deduced that Abraham was born 1,948 years after Adam. The time separating Abraham from Jesus is roughly 1800 years. And the time separating Jesus from Adam is 5800 years.

“This estimate is undeniably wrong: The origins of this inaccuracy arise from the mistakes in the Bible on the Adam-Abraham period.”¹⁴⁰

There is sufficient evidence now from excavation, anthropology and archeology that dates the age of the first human being on earth in tens of thousands of years. The numerical data in Genesis is therefore incompatible with firmly established facts of modern scientific knowledge. The Qur’an does not mention any of these dates and hence the problem of above inaccuracies does not arise at all.

The Bible’s description of the Flood (in chapters 6, 7 and 8 of Genesis) indicates that the deluge was universal and it destroyed all flesh and entire life on earth. The description suggests that the event

¹³⁹ Maurice Bucaille, *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

took place 1656 years after the creation of Adam or 292 years before the birth of Abraham. This description is incompatible with modern knowledge because if the Flood destroyed the whole of the human race, it could not have been possible for Abraham who came only three centuries later to find a humanity that was already regrouped in separate communities, especially if that humanity was reconstituted by Noah's only three sons and their wives.

Moreover, Abraham is placed in the period 1800-1850 B.C. and if Flood took place, as Genesis suggests in its genealogies, roughly three centuries before Abraham, we would have to place it somewhere in the Twenty-first to Twenty-second century B.C. Modern historical knowledge confirms that at this period, civilizations had sprung up in several parts of the world; for their remains have been left to posterity.

“In the case of Egypt, for example, they correspond to the period preceding the Middle Kingdom (2100 B.C.) at roughly the date of the First Intermediate Period before the Eleventh Dynasty. In Babylonia it is the Third Dynasty at Ur. We know for certain that there was no break in these civilizations, so that there could have been no destruction affecting the whole of humanity, as it appears in the Bible.”¹⁴¹

The Qur'anic version of the Flood does not give any dates. Secondly the Qur'an indicates that there was more than Prophet Noah's family in the Ark. In fact the son of Noah did not even come into the Ark.¹⁴² The Qur'an does not say that the Flood was universal, on the contrary there are clear indications that it was local.¹⁴³ The point to note here is that the only document available

¹⁴¹ Maurice Bucaille, *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁴² See Qur'an, (11: 40 and 42).

¹⁴³ In the Qur'an, verse (25: 37) refers to the destruction of the 'the people of Noah'.

about the Flood was the Bible. Had Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him) borrowed his story from the Bible he would have copied the mistakes as well. As it happens, the Qur'an corrected the Biblical story long before any scientific findings were made.

A comparative point of great interest concerning the Exodus, is the absence in the Bible of any mention of the rescue of Pharaoh's body after death.¹⁴⁴ The Qur'an, on the other hand has explicitly recorded what became of his body.

﴿فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدْنِكَ لَتَكُونَنَّ لِمَنْ خَلَقَكَ آيَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَفِلُونَ﴾ (سورة يونس : ٩٢)

"This day we save you in your body so that you may be a sign of those who come after you. But verily many among mankind are heedless of Our signs." (Qur'an 10: 92)

What is amazing, is, that,

"When the Qur'an was transmitted to man by the Prophet, the bodies of all the Pharaohs who are today considered to have had something to do with the Exodus were in their tombs in the Necropolis of Thebes, on the opposite side of the Nile from Luxor. At the time, however, absolutely nothing was known of this fact, and it was not until the end of the Nineteenth century that they were discovered there. As the Qur'an states, the body of the Pharaoh of the Exodus was in fact rescued; visitors may see him in the Royal Mummies Room of Egyptian Museum, Cairo."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ The death of Pharaoh is referred to in Exodus 14:23, 14:28-29. This detail is repeated in the Psalms 106 verses 13 and 15:158. The Qur'an (10: 92).

¹⁴⁵ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, p. 254.

The final area of comparison centres on the genealogies of Prophet Jesus:

“The two genealogies contained in Mathew’s and Luke’s Gospels give rise to problems of verisimilitude, and conformity with scientific data, and hence of authenticity... One must straight away note that the male genealogies have absolutely no relevance to Jesus. Where one to give a genealogy to Mary’s only son, who was without a biological father, it would have to be the genealogy of his mother Mary.”¹⁴⁶

And this is precisely what the Qur’an does. Jesus is placed according to his maternal genealogy in the line of Noah, Abraham and Mary’s father Imran:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (٣٣) ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

(سورة آل عمران : ٣٣-٣٤)

‘God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and family of Imran above all His creatures, as descendants one from another...’
(Qur’an 3: 33-34)

“— So Jesus is descended from Noah and Abraham on his mother Mary’s side, and from her father Imran. The errors made in the naming of the ‘ancestors of Jesus’ found in the Gospels are not present in the Qur’an... Once again, this fact must be noted if one is to be objective, and yet again its great importance appears very clearly in the face of unfounded statements which are made, claiming that Muhammad... largely copied the Bible. One wonders in that case, who, or what reason, compelled him to avoid copying the passages the

¹⁴⁶ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, p. 60.

“Blessed is the one Who placed the constellations in heaven and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light.”

(Qur'an 25: 61)

“Here the moon is defined as a body that gives light (*munīr*) from the same root as *noor* (the light applied to the moon). The sun however is compared to torch (*sirāj*) or a blazing (*Wahhāj*) lamp.”¹⁴⁹

3. There are two very important verses on the orbits of the sun and moon: *Sūrah* 21, verse 33 says,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

(سورة الأنبياء : ٣٣)



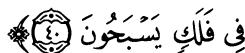
“[God is] the One Who created the night, the day, the sun and the moon. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion.”

(Qur'an 21: 33)

In *Sūrah* 36 verse 40 it says:

﴿لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

(سورة يس : ٤٠)



“The sun must not catch up the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. Each one is travelling in an orbit with its own motion.”

(Qur'an 36: 40)

Here an essential fact is clearly stated: the existence of the sun's and moon's orbits, plus a reference made to the travelling of these bodies in space with their own motion.

“A negative fact also emerges from a reading of these verses: it is shown that the sun moves in an orbit, but no indication is

¹⁴⁹ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, p. 162.

given as to what this orbit might be in relation to the Earth. At the time of the Qur'anic Revelation, it was thought that the sun moved while the Earth stood still. This was the system of geocentrism that had held sway since the time of Ptolemy, Second century B.C. and was to continue to do so until Copernicus in the Sixteenth century A.D. Although people supported this concept at the time of Muhammad, it does not appear anywhere in the Qur'an, either here or elsewhere."¹⁵⁰

4. At a time when it was held that the Earth was the centre of the world and that the sun moves in relation to it, how could any one have failed to refer to the sun's movement when talking of the sequence of night and day? This is not however referred to in the Qur'an and the subject is dealt with as follows: In *Sūrah* 7, verse 54:

﴿...يُغْشَى اللَّيْلُ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا...﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٥٤)

"...[God] covers the day with the night which is in haste to follow it..." (Qur'an 7: 54)

And in *Sūrah* 39, verse 5:

﴿...يَكْوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ...﴾

(سورة الزمر: ٥)



"... He coils the night upon the day and He coils the day upon the night..." (Qur'an 39: 5)

"To coil" or "to wind" seems, as in the French translation by R. Blachere, to be the best way of translating the Arabic verb *Kawwara*. The original meaning of the verb is to "coil" a turban around the head; the notion of coiling is preserved in all the other senses of the word.

Bucaille writes:

¹⁵⁰ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 165-166.

“What actually happens in space? American astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their spaceships, especially at a great distance from Earth, e.g. from the moon. They saw how the sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth’s surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Qur’an. It is easy for the human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the sun’s (relative) immobility and the Earth’s rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpretation of one sector by another, is expressed in the Qur’an just as if the concept of the Earth’s roundness had already been conceived at the time — which was obviously not the case.”¹⁵¹

5. When the verses of the Qur’an concerning the role of water in man’s existence are read in succession today, they all appear to us to express ideas that are quite obvious. The reason for this is simple: in our day and age, we all, to lesser or greater extent, know about the water cycle in nature. If, however, we consider the various concepts the ancients had on this subject, it becomes clear that the data in the Qur’an do not embody ideas from the mythical concepts current at the time of the Revelation...

In the Seventh century B.C. Thales of Miletus held the theory whereby the waters of the oceans, under the effect of winds, were thrust towards the interior of the continents; so the water fell upon the

¹⁵¹ Maurice Bucaille, *Op. cit.*, Pp. 169-171.

earth and penetrated into the soil. Plato shared these views and thought that the return of the waters to the oceans was via a great abyss, the 'Tartarus'. This theory had many supporters until the Eighteenth century, one of whom was Descartes. Aristotle imagined that the water vapour from the soil condensed in cool mountain caverns and formed underground lakes that fed springs. He was followed by Seneca (1st century A.C.) and many others until 1877, among them O. Volger... The first clear formation of the water cycle must be attributed to Benard Palissy in 1580: he claimed that underground water came from rainwater infiltrating into the soil. This theory was confirmed by E. Mariotte and P. Perrault in the Seventeenth Century.

In the following passages from the Qur'an, there is no trace of the mistaken ideas that were current at the time of Muhammad (Blessings and Peace be upon him), *Sūrah* 23, verse 18 reads:

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...﴾

(سورة المؤمنون : ١٨)

"We sent down water from the sky in measure and lodged it in the ground..."
(Qur'an 23: 18)

Other verses include (50: 9-11), (23: 18-19), (15: 22), (35: 9), (30: 48), (7:57), (25: 48-49) and (39: 21) which says,

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...﴾

(سورة الزمر : ٢١)



"Have you not seen that God sent water down from the sky and led it through sources into the ground..."

(Qur'an 39: 21)¹⁵²

¹⁵² Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 180-184.

6. 'Modern geologists describe the folds in the Earth as giving foundations to the mountains, and their dimensions go from roughly one mile to roughly 10 miles. The stability of the Earth's crust results from the phenomenon of these folds. So it is not surprising to find reflections on the mountains in certain passages of the Qur'an such as the following: *Sūrah* 79, verse 23,

(سورة التازعات: ٣٢) ﴿وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَمَهَا﴾

"And the mountains [God] has fixed firmly."

(Qur'an 79: 32)

In *Sūrah* 31, verse 10:

﴿... وَالْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوًسًا أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ ...﴾ (١٠)

(سورة لقمان: ١٠)

"... [God] has cast into the ground [mountains] standing firm, so that it does not shake with you..."

(Qur'an 31: 10),¹⁵³

7. Electricity in the atmosphere and the consequences of this, i.e. lightning and hail, are referred to in *Sūrah* 13, verses 12-13 and in *Sūrah* 24 verse 43 which says:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُرْسِجُ سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى
الْوَدَفَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ
بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ
(سورة الثور: ٤٣)﴾

"Have you not seen that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them a heap, And you

¹⁵³ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 191-192.

see raindrops issuing from within it. He sends down from the sky mountains of hail, He strikes there-with who He wills and He turns it away from whom He wills. The flashing of its lightning almost snatches away the sight."

(Qur'an 24: 43)

"In these two verses there is an expression of an obvious correlation between the formation of heavy rain-clouds or clouds containing hail and the occurrence of lighting: the former, the subject of covetousness on account of the benefit it represents, and the latter, the subject of fear because, when it falls, it is at the will of the Almighty. The connection between the two phenomena is in agreement with present day knowledge of electricity in the atmosphere."¹⁵⁴

8. It is in fact a highly common place reflection on the discomfort experienced at high altitude, which increases the higher one climbs, that is expressed in verse 125 of *Sūrah* 6:

﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ ...

(سورة الأنعام: ١٢٥)



"Those whom God wills to guide, He opened their breast to Islam. Those whom He wills to make lose their way, He made their breast narrow and constricted, as if they were climbing in the sky..."

(Qur'an 6: 125)¹⁵⁵

9. Explaining the phenomenon of shadows the Qur'an says in *Sūrah* 16 verse 48:

¹⁵⁴ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 193-194.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَنْفَعَتُوا ظِلُّهُ، عَنِ الْيَمِينِ
وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ﴾ (سورة النحل : ٤٨)

"Have [the Unbelievers] not observed that for all the things God created, how their shadow shifts right and left, prostrating themselves to God while they are full of humbleness." (Qur'an 16: 48)

"... The text of the Qur'an refers to the relationship between the sun and the shadows. One must bear in mind at this point the fact that in Muhammad's day, it was believed that the way a shadow moved was governed by the movement of the sun from east to west. This principle was applied in the case of the sundial measure the time between sunrise and sunset. In this instance, the Qur'an speaks of the phenomenon without referring to the explanation of it that was current at the time of the Revelation. It would have been readily accepted for many centuries by those who came after Muhammad. In the end however, it would have been shown to be inaccurate."¹⁵⁶

10. When the Qur'an describes the origins of life on a very broad basis, it is extremely concise. It does so in a verse that also mentions the process of the formation of the universe. The Qur'an says in *Sūrah* 21 verse 30:

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

(سورة الأنبياء : ٣٠)

"Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, when We clove them asunder and We

¹⁵⁶ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 194-195.

got every living thing out of water. Will they not believe?"

(Qur'an 21: 30)

"Life is in fact of aquatic origin and water is the major component of all living cells, without Water, Life is not possible... Modern data lead us to think that the oldest living beings must have belonged to vegetable Kingdom: algae have been found to date from the pre-Cambrian period, i.e. the time of the oldest known lands. Organisms belonging to the animal Kingdom probably appeared slightly later: they too came from the sea."¹⁵⁷

11. Concerning 'reproduction in the vegetable Kingdom' one must bear in mind that there are two methods of reproduction... one deserves the term 'reproduction', because this defines a biological process whose purpose is the appearance of a new individual identical to the one that gave it birth. Asexual reproduction is quite simply multiplication... Sexual reproduction in the vegetable Kingdom is carried out by the coupling of the male and female parts of the generic formations united on a same plant or located on separate plants. This is the only form mentioned in the Qur'an (*Sūrah* 20,verse 53):

﴿... وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ ثَبَاتٍ شَقَىٰ﴾

(سورة طه: ٥٣)

"...[God is the One Who] sent water from the sky and thereby We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other."

(Qur'an 20: 53)

"One of a pair' is the translation of *zauj* (plural *azwāj*) whose original meaning is: 'that which, in the company of another,

¹⁵⁷ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, p. 198.

forms a pair'; the word is used just as readily for a married couple as for a pair of shoes."¹⁵⁸

12. Concerning bees the Qur'an says in *Sūrah* 16 verse 68 and 69:

﴿وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلًّا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَنُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ... ﴿٦٩﴾﴾

(سورة النحل : ٦٨-٦٩)

"Your Lord inspired the bee. Choose your dwelling in the hills, in the trees and in what [man] built. Eat of all fruit and follow the ways of your Lord in humility. From within their bodies comes a liquor of different colours where is a remedy for men..."
(Qur'an 16: 68-69)

These two verses contain 3 main statements:

- 12.a. The behaviour of bees is directed by God.

"There is a remarkable nervous organisation supporting their behaviour. It is known that the pattern of a bee's dance is a means of communication to other bees; in this way, bees are able to convey to their own species a direction and distance of flowers which nectar is to be gathered. The famous experiment performed by Von Frisch had shown the meaning of this insect's movement which is intended to transmit information between worker bees."¹⁵⁹

- 12.b. That honey can be used as a remedy to certain diseases. It has been proved that,

¹⁵⁸ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 201-202.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 207.

"Honey can indeed be useful for certain diseases."¹⁶⁰

And according to the Islamic Horizons of November 1987,

"Researchers at Panama City, Florida's Akbar Clinic... since spring 1986, have been studying the abilities of garlic, black seed and honey to enhance the body's immune functions."¹⁶¹

12.c. That the worker-bees who are searching for food are females. The verbs used in Arabic refer to female bees! This is very amazing. For all along, until only recently, people imagined that the "soldier-bees" were males. Apparently these mistaken notions were widespread even during the time of Shakespeare, for he writes in his poem "The Rape of Lucretia":

"If, Collatine, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft,
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robbed and ransacked by injurious theft
In thy weak hive a wand'ring wasp hath crept,
And sucked the honey which thy chaste bee kept."¹⁶²

Concerning worker bees, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, writes,

"The most numerous caste of bees is the workers, which have all female organs... worker-bees feed the brood, clean the hive, guard against intruders, construct combs, collect pollen and nectar..."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, p. 206.

¹⁶¹ *Islamic Horizons*, Illinois: ISNA, Vol. 16, No. 11 and 12, November 1987, p. 10.

¹⁶² William Shakespeare, *The Poems*, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press 1966), "The Rape of Lucretia" Lines 834-840, p. 75.

¹⁶³ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 3, p. 304.

13. The source of the constituents of animal milk is defined in the Qur'an in strict accordance with the data of modern knowledge. *Sūrah* 16 verse 66 says:

﴿وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۚ نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ﴾
(سورة النحل : ٦٦)

“Verily, in cattle there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is inside their bodies, coming from a conjunction between the contents of the intestine and the blood, a milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.”
(Qur'an 16: 66)

The constituents of milk are secreted by the mammary glands. These are nourished, as it were, by the product of food digestion brought to them via the blood-stream. Blood therefore plays the role of collector and conductor of what has been extracted from food, and it brings nutrition to the mammary glands, the producers of milk, as it does to any other organ.

Here the initial process which sets everything else in motion is the bringing together of the contents of the intestine and blood at the level of the intestinal wall itself. This very precise concept is the result of the discoveries made in the chemistry and physiology of the digestive system. It was totally unknown at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (bpuh): the knowledge of it belongs to recent times. As regards the discovery of the circulation of the blood, it was made by Harvey roughly ten centuries after the Qur'anic revelation.

“I consider that the existence in the Qur'an of the verse referring to those concepts can have no human explanation on account of the period in which they were formulated.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 209-210.

14. Concerning human reproduction the Qur'an has many rich details. We shall here highlight only four basic facts:

14.a. Fertilization is performed by only a very small volume of liquid. "The Qur'an repeats this concept eleven times using the following expression: *Sūrah* 16, verse 4,

(سورة النحل : ٤) ﴿خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ...﴾

"[God] fashioned man from a small quantity [of sperm]..."

(Qur'an 16: 4)

— The Arabic word *nutfa* has been translated by the words 'small quantity (of sperm)' because we do not have the terms that are strictly appropriate. It must be stated that this word comes from a verb signifying 'to dribble', 'to trickle', it is used to describe what remains at the bottom of a bucket that has been emptied out. It therefore indicates a very small quantity of liquid."¹⁶⁵

14.b. Spermatoc liquid is formed by various secretions which come from the following glands:

“ — The testicles: The secretion of the male genital gland contains spermatozoons, which are elongated cells with a long flagellum, they bathed in a sero-fluid liquid.

— The seminal vesicles... they also secrete their own liquid.

— The prostate gland: this secretes a liquid which gives the sperm its creamy texture and characteristic odour.

— The glands annexed to the urinary tract: Cooper's or Mery's glands secrete a stringy liquid and Littre's glands give off mucous.

These are the origins of the 'mingled liquids' which the Qur'an refers to when it says in *Sūrah* 76 verse 2:

¹⁶⁵ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 213-214.

﴿إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ﴾ (سورة الإنسان: ٢)

“Verily we fashioned man from a small quantity of mingled liquids...”
(Qur'an 76: 2)¹⁶⁶

14.c. The implantation of the egg in the female genital organs.

“Once the egg has been fertilized in the Fallopian tube, it descends to lodge inside the uterus; this is called the ‘implantation of the egg’.”

The Qur'an names the womb where the fertilized egg lodges in *Sūrah* 22 verse 5,

﴿... وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى﴾ (سورة الحج: ٥)

(سورة الحج: ٥)

“... We cause whom We will to rest in the Womb for an appointed term...”
(Qur'an 22: 5)

The implantation of the egg in the uterus (womb) is the result of the development of villocities, veritable elongations of the egg, which, like roots in the soil, draw nourishment from the thickness of the uterus necessary to the egg's growth. These formations make the egg literally clinging. In *Sūrah* 75 verses 37-38 the Qur'an says:

﴿أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةٍ مِنْ مَّيِّ يَمْنَى﴾ (٣٧) ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى (٣٨)

(سورة القيامة: ٣٧-٣٨)

“Was [man] not a small quantity of sperm which has been poured out? After that he was something which clings; then [God] fashioned him in due proportion.” (Qur'an 75: 37-38)

14.d. The Qur'anic description of certain stages in the development of the embryo corresponds exactly to what we today know about it.

¹⁶⁶ Maurice Bucaille, Op. cit, Pp. 215.

After 'the thing which clings' the Qur'an informs us that the embryo passes through the stage of 'chewed flesh' then osseous tissue appears and is clad in flesh. *Sūrah* 23 verse 14 says:

﴿... فَخَلَقْنَا الْمَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا
الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا...﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٤)

"...We fashioned the thing which clings into a chewed lump of flesh and We fashioned the chewed flesh into bones and We clothed the bones with intact flesh..." (Qur'an 23: 14)

'Chewed flesh' is the translation of the word *mudgha*; 'intact flesh' is *lahm*. This distinction needs to be stressed. The embryo is initially a small mass. At a certain stage in its development, it looks to the naked eye like chewed flesh. The bone structure develops inside this mass in what is called the mesenchyma. The bones that are formed are covered in muscle; the word *lahm* applies to them.

It is known how certain parts appear to be completely out of proportion during embryonic development with what is later to become the individual, while others remain in proportion. This is surely the meaning of the word *mukhallaq* which signifies 'shaped in proportion' as used in verse 5, *Sūrah* 22 to describe this phenomenon:

﴿... فَإِنَّا خَلَقْتُمُ... ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنَبِّينَ
لَكُمْ...﴾ (سورة الحج: ٥)

"... We fashioned... into something which clings... into a lump of flesh in proportion and out of proportion..."

(Qur'an 22: 5)

It was... only during the Nineteenth century that people had a slightly clearer view of this question.

Throughout the Middle Ages, unfounded myths and speculations were at the origin of the most diversified doctrines:

they persisted for several centuries after this period. The most fundamental stages in the history of embryology was Harvey's statement (1651) that "all life initially comes from an egg". At this time however, when nascent science had nevertheless benefited greatly (for the subject in hand) from the invention of the microscope, people were still talking about the respective roles of the egg and the spermatozoon. Buffon, the great naturalist, was one of those in favour of the egg theory, but Bonnet supported that the seeds being 'packed together', the ovaries of Eve, the mother of the human race, were supposed to have contained the seeds of all human beings, packed together one inside the other. This hypothesis came into favour in the Eighteenth century.

"More than a thousand years before our time, at a period when whimsical doctrines still prevailed, men had a knowledge of the Qur'an. The statements it contains express in simple terms truths of primordial importance which man has taken centuries to discover."¹⁶⁷

In the catalogue above we have given by way of example about 20 statements from the Qur'an which are capable of being either true or false. The true-false combination for 20 statements is 1,048,580. This means that all combinations will have a false statement at one point or another except one combination. Considering the nature of those statements the complicated research they demand, the historical period they were uttered, and their impeccable accuracy, the human explanation seems quite unsatisfactory. For the Qur'an has hundreds of such statements and the true-false combination for just one hundred statements stands at the stupendous figure of $12677 \times 1030!!$ Is it really conceivable that Muhammad (bpuh) (or any other human being however genius he might be) could just out of the blues, describe the origin of life on earth, the expanding universe, the

¹⁶⁷ Maurice Bucaille, *Op. cit.*, Pp. 218-219.

constituents of milk and how they are formed, the development of the human embryo and so on and on and without making a single error?

In his talk entitled *The Amazing Qur'an* Garry Miller (1983) discusses numerous other amazing aspects of the Qur'an. Here below we shall mention only three.

The first aspect is the surprising linkage between words and numbers. Examples include the word "*Qālū*" which means "they say" is repeated 332 times in the Qur'an and command "*Qul*" which means "say" is also repeated 332 as if to counter what they say! The phrase "seven heavens" appears seven times in the Qur'an. There are twelve months in the year and the word "*Shahr*" which means "month" appears 12 times in the Qur'an! The word "*yawm*" which means "day" appears 365 times in the Qur'an!

Another aspect discussed by Miller concerns the distinction between the use and mention of words. In the use of a word it is the meaning which is considered and in the mention of a word it is the word itself which is considered. For example if one were to say, "Toronto is a big city", it is the meaning of Toronto which is being considered. However, if one were to say, "Toronto has two t's and three o's, it is the word itself which is being considered. Consider the following statement. "Youth comes before manhood except in the Dictionary". If one does not keep in view this distinction one is likely to land oneself in trouble. For example Miller says if someone says, "There is no mistake in the Bible" you can easily trip him if you showed him the statement in the Bible where it is said, "David made a mistake" and point to the word mistake. But this would be a trick because the Bible does not say 'it has no mistake in it'. It is amazing that the Qur'an has avoided even such minute mistakes. In chapter 4 verse 82 the Qur'an says:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا

(سورة التيساء : ٨٢)



“Do they not ponder over the Qur’an? Had it been from any other than Allah, surely there would have been many contradictions in it.”
(Qur’an 4: 82)

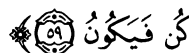
The Arabic word which has been translated as “contradictions” is “*ikhtilāfan*”. Now, since the Qur’an says the occurrence of many “*ikhtilāfan*” in the Qur’an would indicate that the author is not God; all that the trouble-shooter will need to do is to comb in the Qur’an for another word which will be similar in spelling to the above “*ikhtilāfan*” and then he would say: here is another “*ikhtilāfan*”. That would mean that Qur’an has “many” *ikhtilāfan* and therefore it is not divine! It is amazing that the word “*ikhtilāfan*” appears only once in the entire Qur’an and that is in (4: 82). This kind of problem has also been avoided in (2: 2).

Another amazing feature cited by Garry Miller is the fact that whenever the Qur’an says “*this is like that*” the two compared things will always tally in the total number of times each is mentioned in the Qur’an. What is even more striking, that the verse which mentions them side by side is the one they are exactly equal if you count from the first chapter of the Qur’an. Below are two such examples.

In chapter 3 verse 59 the Qur’an says:

﴿إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ

(سورة آل عمران : ٥٩)



“The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him ‘Be’ and he was.”

(Qur’an 3: 59)

Adam has been mentioned 25 times in the Qur’an. Jesus has also been mentioned 25 times in the Qur’an. Moreover in 3: 59 Adam is mentioned for the seventh time if we count from chapter one of the

Qur'an. Similarly, in the same verse 3: 59 Jesus is being mentioned for the seventh time if we count from chapter one of the Qur'an.

Adam has been mentioned in the following verses:

2: 31, 2: 33, 2: 34, 2: 35, 2: 37, 3: 33, 3: 59 (7th time),
5: 27, 7: 11, 7: 19, 7: 26, 7: 31, 7: 35, 7: 35, 7: 172, 17: 61, 17: 70, 18:
50, 19: 58, 20: 115, 20: 116, 20: 117, 20: 120, 20: 121, 36: 60
(25 times).

Jesus has been mentioned in the following verses:

2: 87, 2: 136, 2: 253, 3: 45, 3: 52, 3: 55, 3: 59 (7th time),
3: 84, 4: 157, 4: 163, 4: 171, 5: 46, 5: 78, 5: 110, 5: 112, 5: 114, 5:
116, 6: 85, 19: 34, 33: 7, 42: 13, 43: 63, 57: 27, 61: 6, and 61: 14
(25 times).

It is important to bear in mind that the actual chronology of Qur'anic revelation is quite different from the present arrangement of the Qur'an. Chapter 2 for example was revealed piece-meal for a period of nine years and it comments on about 70 different situations.¹⁶⁸

In chapter 7 verse 176 the Qur'an compares people who follow their vain desires and reject the Signs of God to a dog. "*His similitude is that of a dog... That is the similitude of those who reject Our Signs*". The phrase "*Those who reject Our Signs*" (*Alladhina Kadhdhabū biāyatinā*) appears 5 times in the Qur'an and the word "dog" (*kalb*) appears 5 times. They both appear for the first time in 7: 176.

The phrase "Those who reject Our Signs" appears in the following references:

¹⁶⁸ See, or rather listen to series of interviews with Dr. Jamal A. Badawi on "*Sources of Islam, the Qur'an, the Ultimate Miracle*". The video and audio tapes are disseminated by Islamic Information Foundation, Halifax, Canada. In these tapes Badawi also discusses the linguistic miracle of the Qur'an and many other aspects.

7: 176 (1st time), 6: 177, 21: 77, 25: 36 and 62: 5 (5 times).

The word “dog” appears in the following verses:

7: 176 (1st time), 18: 18, 18: 22, 18: 22 and 18: 22 (5 times).

In chapter 14 verse 26 the Qur’an says, “*And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree*”. In the Qur’an, there are 11 references to the tree with evil associations and 11 references to the ‘word’ with evil associations. Both words appear for the 6th time in verse (14: 26).

And when the Qur’an says “this is unlike that” the total number between the two is also unlike.¹⁶⁹

If we reflect on the first example above, we shall notice that by the time Jesus is being mentioned for the first time in (2: 87), Adam has already been mentioned 5 times with only 2 times remaining. Yet the Qur’an reduces this imbalance and by the time the two names are mentioned in (3: 59) they are both equal. No wonder the Qur’an has challenged those who doubt its sources to produce a book similar to it. Available evidence shows that it is more reasonable to believe that Qur’an is a divine revelation.¹⁷⁰

It would appear from the available evidence that one can only reject the Qur’an, but one cannot disprove it.

¹⁶⁹ Garry Miller’s talk *The Amazing Qur’an* delivered in 1983 in Dubai.

¹⁷⁰ Some scholars have suggested that Satan was probably the author of the Qur’an. See Norman Daniel’s Op. cit, Pp. 83, 94. Dr. Martin Luther (founder of the Lutheran Church) held a similar view. See Sigvard von Sicard’s article, *Luther and the Muslims* in Africa Theological Journal Vol. 9, Number 2, July 1980 Pp. 22-38. The weakness of this claim can be seen by the fact that the Qur’an has not only cursed Satan and declared him the worst enemy of man but also commanded in (16: 98) that before reading the Qur’an one must first seek refuge in God from Satan, the accursed. ‘Satan has undone himself here, if he is the author’. And as the Bible says, “And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end”, Mark 3: 26.

Appendix

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN¹⁷¹

The Bible is a collection of writings by many different authors. The Qur'an is a dictation. The speaker in the Qur'an — in the First Person — is God, and you have in some places, the word of God speaking to men, still in other places, you have some men simply writing about history. The Bible consists of 66 small books. About 18 of them begin by saying: This is the revelation God gave to so and so... The rest make no claim as to their origin. You have, for example, the beginning of the Book of Jonah, which begins by saying: The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: (saying), 'Go to the great city of Nineveh,' ... and then it continues for two or three pages.

If you compare that with one of the four accounts of the life of Jesus, Luke begins by saying to Theophilus: "Many writers have undertaken to draw up an account of the events that have happened among us,... And so I in my turn, your Excellency,... have decided to write a connected narrative for you,..." That is all. There is no claim of saying, "These words were given to me by God. Here they are for you, it is a revelation." There is no mention of this.

The Bible does not contain self-reference, that is, the word "Bible" is not in the Bible. Nowhere does the Bible talk about itself. Some scriptures are sometimes pointed to in the Bible and it is said: 'Here is where the Bible talks about itself.' But we have to look closely. 2 Timothy 3:16 is a favourite reference. It reads: "All

¹⁷¹ Based on a transcript of a Lecture by Dr. Gary Miller.

scriptures is inspired of God.” And there are those who would say, ‘Here is where the Bible talks about itself, it says it is inspired of God, all of it.’ But if you read the whole sentence, you read that this was a letter written by Paul to Timothy, and the entire sentence says to Timothy: “Since you were a young man you have studied the holy scriptures, all scriptures inspired of God” and so on... When Timothy was a young man, the New Testament did not exist. The only thing that seems he was talking about are scriptures — which are only a portion of the Bible — from before that time. It could not have meant the whole Bible.

There is at the end of the Bible a verse which says: “Let anyone who takes away from this book or adds to this book be cursed.” This too, is sometimes pointed to be saying: Here is where it sums itself as a whole. But look again and you will see that when it says: Let no one change this book, it is talking about that last book, Number 66, the Book of Revelation. It has to, because any reference will tell you that the Book of Revelation was written before certain other parts of the Bible were written. It happens today to be stacked at the end, but there are other parts that came after. So the quoted passage cannot be referring to the entire book.

It is an extreme position, held only by some Christian groups, that the Bible — in its entirety — cover to cover, is the revealed word of God in every word. But they do a clever thing when they mention this, or make this claim. They will say that the Bible, in its entirety, is the word of God; inerrant (no mistakes) in the original writings. So, if you go to the Bible and point out some mistakes that are in it, you are going to be told: Those mistakes were not there in the original manuscript, they have crept in, so that we see them there today. They are running into problems by taking that position. There is a verse in the Bible, Isaiah 40:8 which, in fact, is so well known that some Bibles printed it on the inside front cover as an introduction, and it says, “The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God

endures for evermore.” Here is a claim, in the Bible, that the word God will stand forever, it will not be corrupted, and it will not be lost. So, if today you find a mistake in the Bible, you have two choices. Either that promise was false; that when God said my word won’t fade away, he was mistaken; or that the portion which has the mistake in it, was not a part of the word of God in the first place. For the promise was that it would be safeguarded, it would not be corrupted.

I have suggested many times that there are mistakes in the Bible, and the accusation comes back very quickly: Show me one. Well, there are hundreds. If you want to be specific, I can mention a few. You have, for example at 2 Samuel 10:18 a description of a war fought by David saying that he killed 700 men in chariots, and that he also killed 40,000 men on horseback. In 1 Chronicles 19:18 it mentions the same episode, saying that he killed 7,000 men in chariot and the 40,000 men were not on horseback, they were on foot. The point be what it is, the difference between the horseman and pedestrian, is very fundamental.

Mathew 27:5 says that Judas Iscariot when he died he hung himself. Acts 1 says that no, he jumped off a cliff head first. If you study Logic very soon you will come in your course to what they call “undecidable propositions” or “meaningless sentences” or statements that cannot be decided because there is no contextual base. One of the classic examples cited is something called the Effeminites Paradox. This man was a Cretan and he said, “Cretans always lie.” Now, was that statement true or false? If he was a Cretan and he says that they always lie, is he lying? If he is not lying, then he is telling the truth, and then the Cretans do not always lie! You see, it cannot be true and it cannot be false. The statement turns back on itself. It is like saying, “What I am telling you right now is a lie.” Would you believe that or not? You see, the statement has no true content. It cannot be true, and it cannot be false. If it is true, it is always false. If it is false, it is also true.

Well, in the Bible, at Titus 1:12, the writer is Paul, and he is talking about the Cretans. He says that one of their own men — a prophet — said “Cretans always lie”. And he says that what this man says is true. It is a small mistake, but the point is that, it is a human mistake. You do not find that if you carefully examine the true content of that statement. It cannot be a true statement.

Now I come back to the Qur'an. And as I mentioned, the speaker in the Qur'an is — in the First Person — is God. The book claims throughout that it is the word of God. It names itself 70 times as the Qur'an. It talks about its own contents. It has self-reference. The Qur'an states in the first *Sūrah* after *Fātiḥah* that “*This is the book, there is no doubt in it, it is a guidance for those who are conscious of God*” and so on and so forth. It begins that way and continues that way stressing that point. And there is one very amazing statement in the Qur'an when you come to (4: 82) which says to those who say the Qur'an is something else than the word of God. It challenges them saying: “*Have they not considered the Qur'an if it came from someone other than God, they will find in it many mistakes.*” Some of you are students, would you dare to hand in a paper after you completed a research work or something, and then at the bottom of your paper put down there “You won't find mistakes in this.” Would you dare to challenge your professor that way? Well, the Qur'an does that. It is telling: If you really think you know where this came from, then start looking for mistakes, because you won't find any. Another interesting thing the Qur'an does, is that it quotes all its critics. There has never — in hundreds of years — ever been some suggestion as to where that book came from, but that the Qur'an does not already mention that objection and reply to it. Many times you will find the *Āyah* saying something like: Do they say such and such and so, say to them such and such so. In every case, there is a reply. More than that, the Qur'an claims that the evidence of its origin, is in itself, and that if you look at this book, you will be convinced.

So the difference in Christianity and Islam comes down to a difference of authority and appeal to authority. The Christian wants to appeal to the Bible, and the Muslim wants to appeal to the Qur'an. You cannot stop by saying: This is true because by book says it is; and somebody else would say something else is true because by book says differently. You cannot stop at that point, and the Qur'an, does not. The Christians may point to some words that it is recorded that Jesus said and say: This proves my point. But the Muslim does not simply open his book and say: No, no the Qur'an says this; because the Qur'an does not simply deny something the Bible says and say something else instead. The Qur'an takes the form of a rebuttal. It is a guidance as the opening says, "*Huda lil muttaqīn*" (2: 2). So that for every suggestion that the Christian may say, My Bible says such and such, the Qur'an will not simply say: No, that is not true. It will say: Do they say such and such, and ask them such and such. You have, for example, the *Āyah* (verse) that compares Jesus with Adam. There are those who may say that Jesus must have been God (Son of God) because he had no father. He had a woman who was his mother, but there was no human father. It was God that gave him life, so he must have been God's son. The Qur'an reminds the Christians, in one short sentence, to remember Adam — who was his father? — and in fact, who was his mother? He did not have a father either, and in fact he did not have a mother. But what does that make him? So that the likeness of Adam is the likeness of Jesus, they were nothing and then they became something; that they worship God.

So that the Qur'an does not demand belief; the Qur'an invites belief. And here is the fundamental difference. It is not simply delivered as: Here is what you are to believe. On the contrary, throughout the Qur'an, the statements are always: Have you O' man thought of such and such? Have you considered so and so? It is always an invitation for you to look at the evidence, now what do you believe?

The citation of the Bible very often takes the form of what is called in Argumentation, "Special Pleading". Special Pleading is when implications are not consistent. When you take something and you say: Well, that must mean this, but you do not use the same argument to apply it to something else. To give an example, I have seen it in publications many times, stating that Jesus must have been God because he worked miracles. On the other hand, we know very well that there is no miracle ever worked by Jesus, that is not also recorded in the Old Testament as worked by one of the prophets. You had amongst others, Elijah, who is reported to have cured the leper, raised the dead boy to life, and to have multiplied bread for the people to eat. These three, are the most favourite miracles attributed to Jesus. If the miracles worked by Jesus proved he was God, why don't they prove Elijah was God? This is Special Pleading, if you see what I mean. The implications are not consistent. If this implies that, then in that case it must also imply the same thing. We have those who would say Jesus was God because he was taken up in Heaven. But the Bible also say that a certain Einah did not die, he was taken up into Heaven by God. Whether it is true or not, who knows? But the point is, if Jesus being taken up proves he is God, why does not it prove Einah was God? The same thing happened to him.

I wrote to a man one time, who wrote a book about Christianity, and I had some of the objections I have mentioned to you now. And his reply to me was what I am making matters difficult to myself. He said that there are portions in the Bible that are crystal clear and that there are portions that are difficult. And my problem was that I am looking at the difficult parts instead of the clear parts. The problem is that this is an exercise in self-deception. Why are some parts clear and some parts difficult? It is because somebody decided what this clearly means, now that makes this very difficult. To give you an example, in John chapter 14, a certain man said to Jesus: Show us God, and Jesus said: If you have seen me, you have seen God. Now,

without reading on, the Christian will say: See Jesus claimed to be God, he said if you have seen me you have seen God. If that is crystal clear, then you have a difficult portion when you go back just a few pages to chapter 5 when another man came to Jesus and said: Show us God. And Jesus said: You have never seen God, you have never heard his voice. Now, what did he mean there if on the other occasion he meant that he was God? Obviously, you have made matters difficult by deciding what the first one meant. If you read on in chapter 14 you will see what he went on to say. He was saying the closest you are going to seeing God are the works you see me doing.

It is a fact that the words “Son of God” are not found on the lips of Jesus anywhere in the first three Gospel accounts. He was always calling himself the “Son of Man”. And it is a curious form of reasoning that I have seen so often that it is established from Bible that he claimed to be God because, look at how the Jews reacted. They will say, for example, he said such and such and the Jews said he was blaspheming, he claimed to be God and they tried to stone him. So they argue that he must have been claiming to be God because, look! The Jews tried to kill him. They said that is what he was claiming. But the interesting thing is that all the evidence is then built on the fact that a person is saying: I believed that Jesus was the son of God because the Jews who killed him said that, is what he used to say! His enemies used to say that, so he must have said it. This is what it amounts to. On the other hand, we have the words of Jesus saying he would keep the law, the law of Moses and we have the statement in the Bible. Why did the Jews kill him? Because he broke the law of Moses. Obviously, the Jews misunderstood him, if he promised he would keep the law, but they killed him because he broke the law, they must have misunderstood him, or lied about him.

When I talk about the Bible and quote various verses here and there, I am often accused of putting things out of context; that is, you have lifted something out of what it was talking about and given it a

meaning. I do not want to respond to the accusation as such, but it does not seem to occur to many people that perhaps those who wrote portions of the Bible in the first place, were guilty of the same thing. May be, some of those writers, believed a certain thing and in order to prove it, quoted from their scriptures — the Old, Testament, the Hebrew writings — quoted out of context to prove their point. There are examples of that kind of thing. In Mathew 2 it is said that a king wanted to kill the young child Jesus, so he with his family went to Egypt, and they stayed there until that king died and then they came back. When the writer of Mathew, whoever he was, because the name Mathew will not be found in the book of Mathew, described this event, saying that he came back out of Egypt, he said: “This was to fulfil a prophecy which is written” and then he quotes Hosea, chapter 11: “Out of Egypt I called my Son”. So he said because Jesus went to Egypt and then came back out of Egypt and we have this passage in Hebrew scriptures, “out of Egypt I called my Son”, Jesus must have been the son of God. If you look and see what he was quoting, Hosea 11:1 he quotes the second half of a complete sentence. The complete sentence reads: “When Israel was young I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son.” Israel, the nation, was considered as the son of God. Moses was told to go to Pharaoh and say to him: If you touch that nation of people, you touch my son; warning him, warning Pharaoh: don’t touch that nation, calling the nation, “the son of God”. So that this is the only thing talked about in Hosea 11:1. “Out of Egypt I called my son” can only refer to the nation of Israel. I mentioned this point some months ago here in another talk, to which a young lady with us objected that Israel is a symbolic name for Jesus. You will have a hard time finding that anywhere in the Bible because it is not there. You can take an index of the Bible and look up the word “Israel” everywhere the word occurs, and you will find nowhere in any place that you can connect the word Israel with Jesus. But never mind, suppose it is true, read on, the second verse says, “and after that he kept worshipping Bal”, because this what the Israelites were

guilty of, very often they kept falling back into idol worshipping. So if that "Israel" really meant Jesus, and it means that Jesus is the son of God that came out of Egypt, it must also mean that Jesus from time to time used to bow down to that idol, Bal. You have to be consistent, and follow through on what it says. So the point is, whoever wrote Mathew and chapter 2 was trying to prove a point by quoting something out of context, and he undid himself, because if you follow through on it, it cannot be so.

Now I can come back to the claim the Qur'an makes that it has internal evidence of its origin. There are many ways that you can look at this. As one example, if I single out somebody here and say: You know, I know your father, he is going to doubt that. He has never seen me with his father. He would say, how does he look like? Is he tall or short? Does he wear glasses? And so on and so forth. And if I give him the right answer, pretty soon he will be convinced: "O' yes, you did meet him." If you apply the same kind of thinking, when you look at the Qur'an, here is a book that says it came from the One Who was there when the universe began. So, you should be asking that one: So tell me something that proves it. Tell me something that shows me you must have been there when the universe was beginning. You will find in two different *Āyahs* (verses) the statement that all the creation began from a single point. And from this point it is expanding. It is the big bang origin of the universe. It was determined by the large radio receivers that have for the telephone companies which were sensitive enough to pick up the transmissions from satellites and it kept finding background noise that they could not account for. Until the only explanation came to be; it is a left over energy from that original explosion which fits in exactly as described by the Qur'an.

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